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FUTURE OF DEI OFFICE LEFT UNCERTAIN AFTER COLLEGE REORGANIZATION, VICE PRESIDENT'S RESIGNATION

COURTESY PHOTO / RANIA AL-BAHARA

For at least 18 months after Hussain steps down, the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion's functions will be overseen by other areas of the administration.

By HUGO ZHANG
News Editor

Khuram Hussain, vice president of equity and inclusion and professor of Education Studies, announced in early March that he will step down from his current administrative role on June 30 and return to the classroom as a full-time faculty member in the fall.

The college sent an email to the community on March 25 in which they acknowledged the uncertainty facing higher education, providing updates and basic guidelines for dealing with these threats. The college also announced the distribution of the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion's functions to various other areas for at least the next 18 months. Six of the programs and departments currently listed as under the office's purview will be moved, leaving the office's long-term role on campus uncertain.

The Anderson Freeman Center, the Scott Center for Spiritual and Religious Life, Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life, and the Education for Equity teams will be transitioned to the supervision of Student Affairs, according to the email, which was signed by Interim President Steve Snyder, General Counsel Hannah Ross and Executive Vice President and Provost Michelle McCauley. The Office of General Counsel will now oversee the Civil Right/Title IX office and the Disability Resource Center.

Hussain told The Campus that he is resigning from his current administrative position for personal reasons, a point Snyder had emphasized in the original announcement email as well.

"My spouse recently received a critical medical diagnosis that has required me to reprioritize important aspects of my life," Hussain wrote in an email to The Campus, explaining his reasons for stepping down. "My decision is largely shaped by that reality."

Hussain also mentioned that it has been a long-term goal of his to

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ANTICIPATED CUTS TO FULBRIGHT PROGRAMS PROMPT CONCERN IN MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN
Managing Editor

Middlebury has been named a Fulbright Top Producing Institution for the 15th consecutive year, with nine alumni teaching, researching and interning abroad on a Fulbright scholarship for the 2024–25 academic year. These Fulbright recipients have experienced recent uncertainty over their funding following the Trump administration's attacks on higher education, efforts to cut federal spending on international aid and attempts to eliminate programs it believes promote "woke" ideology.

As 11 Middlebury semi-finalists anxiously await their award notifications for next year, recently graduated Fulbrighters have learned about various cuts and changes to their respective countries' programs that will impact next year's grantees.

On Feb. 13, some recipients of U.S. State Department grants — which fund scholarships such as Fulbright, the Gilman Scholarship Program and the Critical Language Scholarship Program — received an alarming notice of a 15-day pause on their upcoming due payments. To the knowledge of Associate Dean for Fellowships and Research Lisa Gates, no Middlebury alumni or student recipients of Fulbrights or other scholarships received this notice because their specific programs are sufficiently well-funded by their host countries and able to continue supporting them despite the temporary freeze.

Regardless, news of this message prompted widespread concern among grantees from colleges across the country. NAFSA, a nonprofit that supports international education, posted an update on March 26 that 65% of the delayed payments had been distributed, weeks after the 15-day pause originally prescribed.

Claire Babbott-Bryan '23 is on an English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Fulbright at the Metropolitan University of Technology in Mexico. As she and other Fulbrighters in Mexico heard that funding for grantees in other countries had been paused, their program's WhatsApp group chat erupted with anxious messages.

"It became clear really

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Students and faculty debate the merits of A.I. in classrooms

By SAMMY ROSIN
Contributing Writer

Middlebury does not currently have an institutional policy dictating how artificial intelligence (A.I.) should be used in the classroom, which leaves the decision up to individual professors. In an attempt to encourage intentional A.I. use in academic instruction, the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research (CTLR) and the Office of Digital Learning & Inquiry (DLINQ) recently hosted a series of workshops for professors and peer writing tutors that focused on strategies and techniques for implementing A.I. as a tool for learning.

Author and educator John Warner also gave a talk on campus on March 11, entitled "Resist, Renew, Explore: How to Think About Human Writing and Learning in the Age of A.I."

The Writing Center, located in the CTLR, organized a workshop with Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric Héctor Vila on Feb. 26 for peer writing tutors on the use of A.I. The event focused on the benefits of tutors using A.I. to identify the issues with a student's writing, allowing them to work closely with students to make actual changes to their papers during sessions, instead of the students making those edits later.

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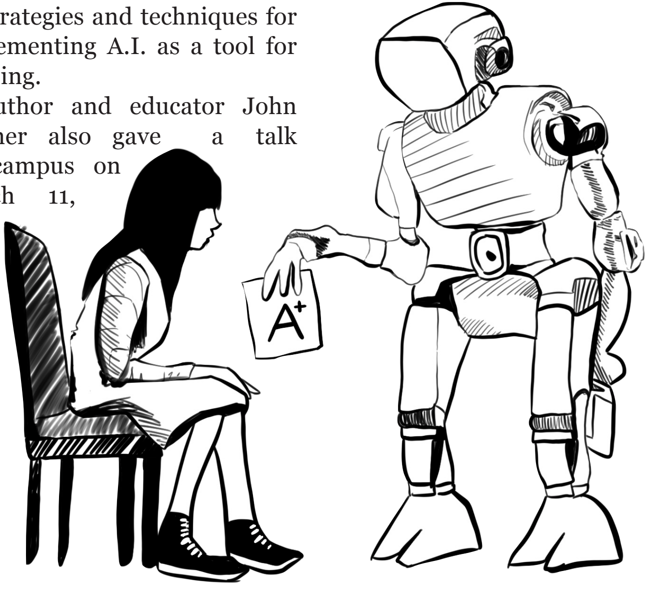

MIA LEVINGS/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

BLACK STUDENT UNION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO RECLAIM ADIRONDACK HOUSE

Adirondack House
534 College Street

DAVID ZHAO / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Coltrane Lounge, the common space in ADK, was historically operated by the Black Student Union. BSU's recent proposal demands that their organization regain this ownership.

By NORAH KHAN
Arts & Culture Editor

Last month, the organizations Black Student Union (BSU) and Black Students Heard (BSH) launched a public initiative to reclaim the Adirondack House (ADK) as an affinity space for Black students, citing historical promises by the college and what they see as an urgent need for community building at Middlebury.

Some of the campaign's concrete demands are to reallocate space inside ADK to house offices for the Black Studies Program, provide BSU priority booking for Coltrane Lounge, renovate the lounge and designate rooms as affinity housing for Black students.

In an email to The Campus, Residential Life said they had not heard of the proposition and did not comment on the outlined measures.

Located at 534 College Street, ADK is currently used as

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By THEO MANIATIS

Women's hockey falls to Amherst in frozen four rematch

By KANAN CLIFFORD

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Anticipated cuts to Fulbright programs prompt concern in Middlebury community

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COURTESY PHOTOS / CLAIRE BABBOT-BRYAN

Claire Babbott-Bryan '23 teaches English on a Fulbright Scholarship at the Metropolitan University of Technology in Mexico. There are currently approximately 55 Fulbrighters teaching English in Mexico, but next year there could be as few as 20.

quickly that the [U.S.] State Department was gutting a lot of these international programs and so it was very confusing and frightening for a lot of us," Babbott-Bryan said.

More than a week later, Fulbright Mexico hosted a Zoom meeting, where the program director ensured the grantees that they would receive the remaining third of their stipend as planned in May. However, sweeping changes will apply for the 2025–26 academic year.

The number of Fulbright ETA grantees for Mexico will be cut from approximately 65 to 20, and stipend amounts for these grantees may also be reduced. Program staff said that this is mainly because the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) in Mexico is cutting a large amount of their funding for the program, which Babbott-Bryan speculated was done in anticipation of the instability of U.S policy and funding under Trump. She expressed concern about the reduction in grantees next year, as far fewer schools across Mexico will receive cultural and language instruction from native English speakers.

"It has become really clear living here, just how important it is to have there be resources for English language learning and true, honest cultural exchange in a way that's not just like a tourist traveling," Babbott-Bryan said. "Thinking about all of the communities, especially smaller communities, that are going to miss out on those resources and opportunities that come from that, is a really, really sad thing."

Fulbrighters in Mexico also received a brief email stating that Fulbright Mexico's mentorship program — which invites 10 Fulbright ETA grantees back for a second year to help first-year grantees adjust to life in Mexico — is cancelled for next year, despite several current grantees having already applied for the positions. Babbott-Bryan shared that this program has been integral to her Fulbright experience.

"It was really critical, I think, for my transition to Mexico, having this mentorship program — being able to ask anything, whether it's about finances or like getting our immigration card or visa or making friends or a place to go out dancing," Babbott-Bryan said.

Sydney Armor '24 is on a community-based combined Fulbright in Graz, Austria, where she works as an English teaching assistant at two high schools, interns at a center for migrant women who have faced gender-based violence and takes courses at the University of Graz. Armor was shocked when she heard some grantees had received the funding freeze notification. However, like Fulbright Mexico, Fulbright Austria is mostly funded by the Austrian government.

"I kind of thought Fulbright would be safe at least for a while because it's such an old program that has always had a lot of bipartisan respect," Armor said. "I was kind of worried because it took our coordinators a little bit of time to reach out to us and sort of explain that we were going to be okay."

While plans for next year are unconfirmed, the program coordinators in Austria told grantees that some restructuring will be necessary. Fulbright grants for ETAs will likely remain, but additional stipends that the program provides for activities like internships and coursework will be reduced or eliminated.

Ellie Suit '24 is on Fulbright in Belgium, where she conducts physics research on the theory of complex quantum systems at the University of Antwerp. Her funding is safe, but like Babbott-Bryan and Armor, she learned in a virtual meeting that Fulbright Belgium, which also administers the program in Luxembourg, is in the process of adjusting next year's programming. It is possible that if a research project addresses "woke" topics such as gender identity and climate, it may no longer be eligible for a Fulbright.

"I think this would be so sad because it would really create isolation between the U.S. and the world, but then also reduce international collaborations, which is really important in my field," Suit said.

Gates, the college's associate dean for fellowships and research, was unsurprised to learn that Fulbright programs will change next year; it makes sense to her that other countries would decrease funding due to concerns over U.S. cuts to funding.

Other awards partially supported by the U.S. State Department that Middlebury students benefit from are the Gilman Scholarship Program and the Critical Language Scholarship Program.

Christina Ritter '26 is currently studying abroad on a Gilman Scholarship in Kenya and has not received any messaging from the program regarding changes to her funding, but mentioned being worried about a possible funding freeze after another Gilman Scholar she knows received that notice. Four Middlebury students were recently selected as finalists for Critical Language Scholarships and one was selected as an alternate candidate. So far, they have not received any notification of changes to their upcoming programs.

Gates said that no emails notifying Middlebruy's 11 Fulbright semi-finalists of their award status have been sent, signaling a delay in the process compared to previous years. This delay may present challenges for semi-finalists who are offered other post-graduate opportunities that require an answer before they know if they have been selected for a Fulbright.

"Everyone is nervous. There is no hard information, and we're living in this environment of unprecedented uncertainty," Gates said. "It's a hard time, and I imagine students may be more conservative in their decision-making than they might be in a different economic and political climate."

Despite these concerns, Gates has not changed the way she advises students and will continue to encourage those who are interested in pursuing State Department-funded opportunities. However, she said that information about changes to programs has been difficult to come by in any clear, accessible format.

"I'm getting my information sometimes directly from representatives of these [scholarship] organizations. Sometimes I'm getting it from students who have received award notifications, because I'm not copied on those. I'm getting it from the news. I'm getting it from Reddit," she said.

Gates mentioned that the personal statement portion of the application for the next application cycle has been replaced with a series of short answers about "fulfilling the Fulbright mission," marking a significant change for students currently considering applying.

The kick-off meeting with fellowship advisors for the next Fulbright application cycle will occur on April 4 as scheduled, when advisors will outline further changes in more detail and explain how Trump's executive orders will affect Fulbrights.

JOURNALIST PETER BEINART REFLECTS ON JEWISH IDENTITY IN LIGHT OF ISRAEL-GAZA

COURTESY PHOTO/ TODD BALFOUR

Journalist and commentator Peter Beinart spoke to students, faculty, staff and community members in Wilson Hall on Tuesday, March 25.

By SAM LUEKE

Contributing Writer

Middlebury College hosted a talk with prominent journalist and City University of New York (CUNY) Professor Peter Beinart titled "Being Jewish after the Destruction of Gaza" on Tuesday, March 25. Sponsored by a dozen departments in the college, the event in Wilson Hall was attended by around 130 students and community members, and it was moderated by Professor of History Febe Armanios and Professor of Jewish Studies Ted Sasson.

Beinart is a journalist, MSNBC commentator and author of four books, including the recently released "Being Jewish after the Destruction of Gaza: a Reckoning." His writing for publications such as the New York Times and the Atlantic has garnered international attention. He's no stranger to Middlebury, either: Beinart previously spoke on campus in 2012 about his book "The Crisis of Zionism" that reflected on Israel and its role in the peace process with Palestine.

Beinart began the talk by establishing his connection with both Judaism and, more specifically, the state of Israel. Beinart is an Orthodox Jew and as a child, he frequently traveled to Israel; he said being in a majority-Jewish environment gave him a sense of safety and belonging that was rare elsewhere. He then discussed his early experiences interacting with Palestinians in the West Bank and how unmoored he felt after coming to understand the colonial history behind the nation he grew up visiting.

Today, Beinart is an advocate of the one-state solution, a scenario in which Israel-Palestine would be departitioned and Palestinians would live under full legal equality with Israelis. He finds theological justification for this view in the principles of Judaism, as well as a rational argument for such a political system.

"When people are locked out of government, they are more likely to take up arms against the state," Beinart explained, citing apartheid in South Africa and The Troubles in Northern Ireland as examples of this phenomenon.

Armanios, the history professor who moderated and organized the event, said she appreciated Beinart's analysis of Israeli policies and the political future of the region.

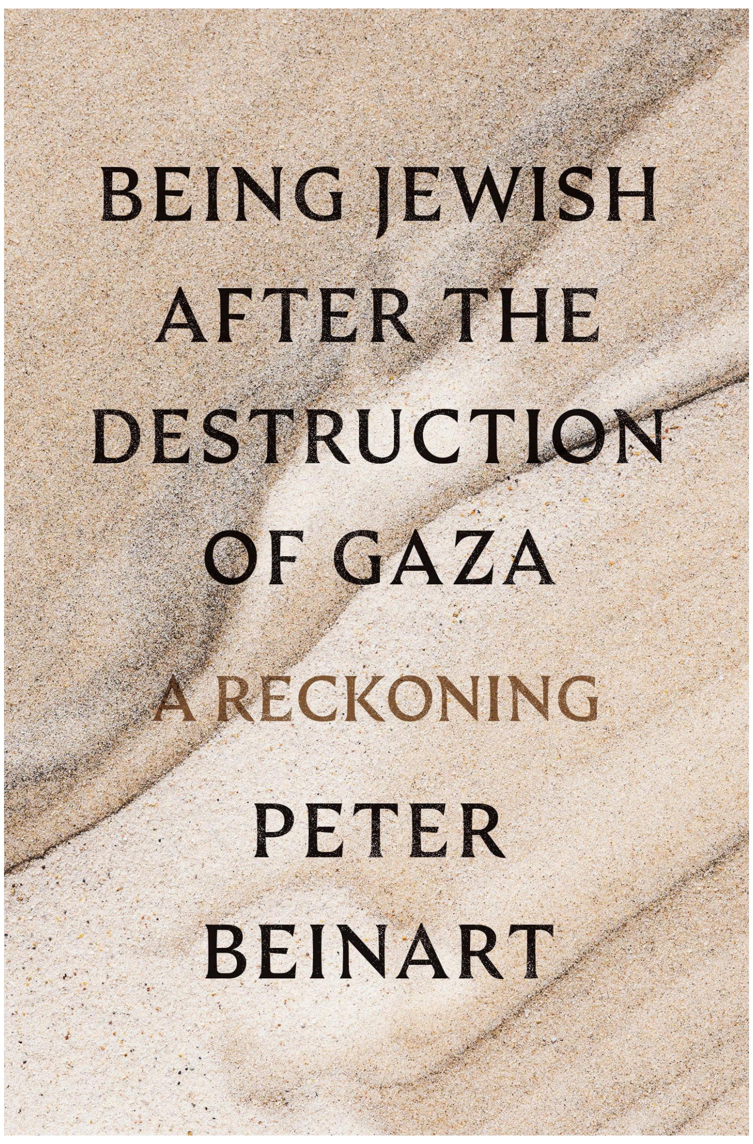
"On this topic, I find his writing to be lucid and incisive, and the book offers valuable insights into one of the most significant geopolitical and moral issues of our time. The fact that so many groups across campus, from Jewish Studies to Philosophy and the President's Office, co-sponsored this event shows a widespread hunger for discussions of this topic," Armanios wrote in an email to The Campus.

Middlebury Rabbi and Associate Chaplain Danielle Stillman also praised the way the moderated discussion was conducted.

"I especially appreciated the format of the Peter Beinart event," Stillman wrote in an email to The Campus. "Having Professor Sasson and Professor Armanios on stage with Peter Beinart to ask questions provided a range of perspectives on this topic, in conversation with each other, in a public space. I hope we can continue to find opportunities for this kind of exchange."

Beinart concluded his lecture by saying he shares that same hope for the future of difficult conversations on college campuses such as Middlebury's.

"I think it is great to try to curate these conversations, and I think that one of the wonderful things about a college campus which brings together people from lots of different backgrounds, is that you have those opportunities, even in informal ways," he said at the end of his talk. "I often find that the best way to start these things is not to ask about someone's views, but to ask about their life experiences."



BEING JEWISH
AFTER THE
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A RECKONING

PETER
BEINART

Peter Beinart has written four books, most recently "Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza."

SO-FULL SISTERS FOOD TRUCK OFFERS NEW DINING OPTION AS BIHALL KIOSK CLOSES

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PHOEBE AN/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The So-Full Sisters food truck parks on weekdays in between BiHall and the FIC.

By PHOEBE AN
Staff Writer

Students returned from spring break to a new dining option officially available on campus: a food truck operated by So-Full Sisters will now be parked outside BiHall and the Freeman International Center every weekday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. starting Monday, March 24. The email announcing the food truck's opening from Student Government Association President B Striker '25 also noted that the BiHall kiosk, which opened in September 2023, has permanently closed.

"The BiHall kiosk closure is part of a broader effort to find a more sustainable model for serving students across campus," Striker said in an interview with The Campus.

Striker noted in his original email that student workers formerly employed by BiHall's kiosk will be offered shifts in dining halls to compensate for their lost hours.

The So-Full Sisters arrive on campus after previously having operated at Rikert Outdoor Center in Ripton, Vt. and in Rhode Island. The food truck's speciality is their chicken and waffle bowls, but their menu also includes bagels, breakfast sandwiches, coffee, baked goods and other snacks.

Leah Klatzker, co-founder of So-Full Sisters, shared her excitement about working with Dining Services in an interview with The Campus.

"I had been talking with the Dining Operations Manager, Dan Detora, who reached out to us. He knew about us and he said that it would be a great idea. There's no hot food or coffee on this side of the campus, besides the little convenience store," Leah Klatzker said.

Leah Klatzer started So-Full Sisters during the Covid-19 pandemic with her twin sister, Rachel Klatzker.

"We wanted people to gather outside safely and still create a connection during a time where everybody you know was scared and disconnected... it's just all about the community for us and bringing a smile to people's faces," Leah Klatzker said. "It's a lot of hard work, but the reward is making people smile with our food."

Leah Klatzker also noted how sisterhood has withstood the test of co-founding a food service business. Although Rachel will not be working at the on-campus location, Leah thinks fondly of their relationship as both twins and business partners.

"We fight a lot, but we don't take it personally, you know? We just get over it immediately. We also can just look at each other when it's busy, and both just know what to do and who needs to do what. If I'm working with my sister, we just look at each other and say, it's go time. Let's go," she said.

The food truck has already attracted students, with many excited by the prospect of a continually open dining option. Shirley Maldonado '27 noticed that the BiHall kiosk was never open during times of significant student traffic in the building. After making a purchase from the food truck, Maldonado expressed her satisfaction.

"I just got a mocha latte. I really like it. I think it's perfect, now as it's getting a bit warmer. I study here every day and most of the time I would try to go to the kiosk, but it would be closed. So unfortunately, I wouldn't be able to buy anything," she said.

Cindy Castillo '27 echoed these complaints about the former kiosk.

"Although I don't study here as often, whenever I went to the kiosk, it was never open," Castillo explained.

Both students said they enjoyed their mocha lattes, adding that they plan to return to the truck.

Sofullsisters.com
So_full_sisters

SGA President B Striker '25 at the food truck with co-owner Leah Klatzker.

Black Student Union Launches Campaign to Reclaim Adirondack House

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student housing for juniors and seniors, but the house has been historically designated for Black students. In 1973, the college declared Coltrane Lounge in ADK to be an affinity space for the BSU, known at the time as Black Students for Mutual Understanding. Since then, however, stewardship of ADK and the lounge has changed as a result of administrative decisions over the years.

Current BSU president Che DeFreitas '27 said he supports the measures outlined for ADK in the organization's proposal.

"We would have a space that is for Black students, as we would have a physical space on campus to host. It is important for Middlebury to show its Black students that we are cared for and valued," DeFreitas said.

Last year's president of BSU Arsema Lecko '26 also shared the importance of prioritizing a space for Black students on campus. In light of the Trump administration's recent attacks on diversity and inclusion policies in higher education, they reiterated the need for Middlebury College to demonstrate its mission of protecting students with tangible actions.

"Regardless of if there are eight students or 200 students, there should still be a space for them to feel safe," Lecko said.

After learning about the history of the building and lounge, members of last year's BSU board along with the group Black Students Heard (BSH) wrote a proposal advocating for a Black affinity space outside of PALANA and the AFC.

"Spaces designated for People of Color are not solely intended for Black students... In an environment where the Black populations are a minority, their needs, even in these affinity spaces, can quickly get overshadowed," the petition states.

Lecko said they have worked with the movement since its inception after learning about the history of ADK during the organization's annual Black Girl Brunch at Mitchell Green Lounge. The event is typically held in Coltrane Lounge, and the new location — which was chosen due to scheduling conflicts — surprised the alumni in attendance.

"They were like, 'Why would Coltrane be busy, that's your space?'" Lecko told The Campus. "They explained to us then that it used to be the BSU space for meetings and events. From that, we were so confused and intrigued."

Lecko and other board members then contacted Middlebury Special Collections to search for information about the space.

"We found articles and records that Coltrane was given to the Black Students for Mutual Understanding," Lecko said, adding that the ongoing national discourse surrounding the Civil Rights Movement and racial tension impacted the decision to designate ADK for the organization. "Basically, they were facing too much of the social and political impacts of what was going on nationally, on campus."

While researching this history, Lecko connected with former BSU President Leroy Nesbitt '82, who was also the first faculty member to serve as Special Assistant to the President, a role he held from 1992 to 2008. When he was a student, Nesbitt felt that Adirondack House and Coltrane offered Black students a sense of place and belonging at Middlebury.

"Coltrane enriched the lives of everyone on campus including faculty, staff, students," he said.

Coltrane Lounge once hosted everything from social events to debates to talks from prominent figures like Betty Shabaz, a civil rights activist and the wife of Malcom X. Nesbitt said that during his time at the college the space was a hub of Black culture and intellect, but also hosted broader conversations surrounding social issues.

The space has drastically changed since when Nesbitt was a student, however.

"Coltrane Lounge, the second floor and the kitchen [of ADK] were operated by the BSU, they had the keys," Nesbitt said, adding that the ownership change stemmed from the lack of space. "At some point, the college took back the space because they needed the space for school."

Currently, the process for booking Coltrane Lounge through Events Management is the same no matter which organization wants to use the space. Under the proposed plan, BSU would have the ability to review external requests to book the lounge, empowering them to reserve Coltrane for club events and to preserve the integrity of the space.

"There is an ongoing struggle with the college deciding which spaces can be used for student activities and organizational space, outside of this issue. How can the college support student organizations and provide the spaces they need?" he added.

The Covid-19 pandemic's health and living policies also affected the space's use, leading to the eventual dissolvement of BSU's ties to Adirondack House.

In addition to reallocating spaces for affinity housing and workspaces for the Black Studies Program, the BSU proposal also seeks to add elevator access to the second floor of ADK and to create a new library to enhance the Black Studies' academic spaces.

During her time at Middlebury, Mildred Reese '70, the founder of Black Students for Mutual Understanding, made the space the group's own. Reese and her peers were admitted after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. At 16 students, they were the then-largest group of Black students ever admitted into Middlebury. Lecko met with Reese last year while drafting the proposal, and remembers Reese being especially disappointed when she heard that the Lounge had been lost, adding that she and her peers spent a lot of time cleaning and renovating the space to make it their own, only to have it lost decades later.

Although the proposal would prioritize the Black Student Union's autonomy over Coltrane Lounge and large spaces in ADK, the student organizers emphasized their goal is to build intentional community at Middlebury, not to divide the student body.

"It's very important that there is an initiative to prioritize Black students. But that doesn't mean it neglects other students. We can't be grouped into a monolith, which is what the administration keeps on trying to do. It's not fair for leaders of these spaces to make everyone feel welcomed and represented, it's near-impossible," Lecko said.

On top of the goals outlined in the proposal, the student organizers said they want the campus community to recognize the history of ADK and Coltrane and remember the commitment Middlebury made in 1973 to Black students on campus.

"We're not asking for a brand-new Black space, we're just asking for something that originally belonged to the BSU. We're just asking to get something back," Lecko said.

Students and faculty debate the merits of A.I. in the classroom

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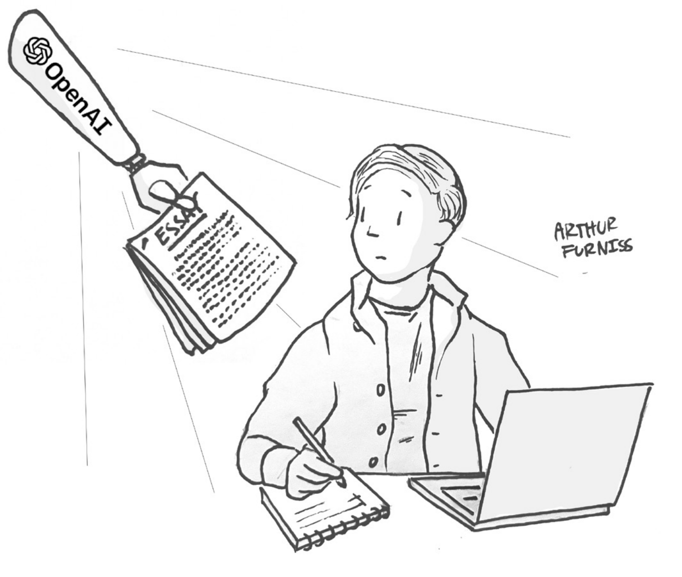

ARTHUR FURNISS / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A.I. as a tool for learning.

Author and educator John Warner also gave a talk on campus on March 11, entitled "Resist, Renew, Explore: How to Think About Human Writing and Learning in the Age of A.I."

The Writing Center, located in the CTLR, organized a workshop with Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric Héctor Vila on Feb. 26 for peer writing tutors on the use of A.I. The event focused on the benefits of tutors using A.I. to identify the issues with a student's writing, allowing them to work closely with students to make actual changes to their papers during sessions, instead of the students making those edits later.

However, beliefs on the extent to which A.I. should be used in the classroom vary. Cole Siefer '25 and Aren Lau '27, two peer writing tutors that attended the workshop, expressed some of their concerns afterwards, believing the tutoring process is more impactful without artificial intelligence.

"If students don't need to do their readings, or don't need to understand the readings themselves, what's the significance of writing about them?" Siefer said. "I guess that's a pretty philosophical question, but I think it's worth considering, if students don't need to do the leg work to understand the material that they're learning, what value is their writing?"

Lau echoed Siefer's hesitations about the emerging technology's use in the classroom.

"Of course A.I. can help you understand and digest things, but isn't the process also part of it?" Lau said. "It's not just about taking in the content. It's about engaging with the content. You can't totally understand something unless you actually engage with it and A.I. puts a barrier in between that engagement."

The workshop also brought to light the challenge for writing tutors to implement AI tools while adhering to the Honor Code, which does not assert a uniform A.I. policy. The Middlebury Handbook currently permits the use of artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT when permitted by an instructor, but provides no guidance to the instructors themselves.

"Any use of generative AI tools that is not expressly permitted or approved by an instructor may be considered cheating and/or plagiarism," the handbook states.

Siefer stressed that the lack of clear direction in instructor policies places writing tutors in a difficult position.

"One of my biggest concerns was going against the Honor Code in my writing tutoring sessions. I don't want to have to read a student's syllabus when I'm helping them to know if I can use [AI] or not," Siefer said.

Despite student and faculty concerns, Vila expressed his belief in the widespread importance of AI and the necessity of adapting ways of teaching and learning to take advantage of it.

"A.I. itself is like a bowling ball that hits all the pins. So it's hitting every department, every structure, and if you are a static structure, you're going to get blown up," Vila told The Campus.

Vila frequently incorporates tools like NotebookLM and Chat GPT into his own teaching. NotebookLM and ChatGPT are both examples of generative A.I. (as opposed to traditional AI like recommendation assistants on Netflix and Amazon), which means they can create completely new content based on patterns they learn to pick out from existing data. His students use NotebookLM to peer edit each other's essays by asking the A.I, tools to generate a summary of their partner's argument, and if the AI summary differs from what the writer intended, the student can then rewrite and clarify the point on their own. Vila explained that NotebookLM is especially useful for teaching and learning because it does not rewrite content the way that ChatGPT can.

"It's strictly a tool to make you think deeper and get more engaged in the minutia of your work," Vila said.

On the issue of academic integrity, Warner's March 11 talk emphasized the need to reevaluate our education system as a whole, arguing that education has become transactional, where "students are turned into customers and generative AI satisfies that transaction." Warner suggested that in order to discourage students from abusing AI, it is critical to help them see the value of education and embrace curiosity.

As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, its future in Middlebury classrooms remains uncertain. While it possesses the ability to make learning more efficient, it also can take away the critical thinking that is at the heart of intellectual curiosity and learning.

FUTURE OF DEI OFFICE LEFT UNCERTAIN AFTER COLLEGE REORGANIZATION

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of practitioners an incredibly rewarding experience.

"The staff at the Anderson Freeman Center, Prism Center, and Scott Center foster a sense of belonging and joy for thousands of students; our Education for Equity team shows up with care and skill to hold space for some of the hardest conversations and facilitates important learning on our campus; and our leaders in the Office of Civil Rights and the Disability Resource Center dedicate their professional lives to affirm the rights and dignity of all in Middlebury's community," he wrote to The Campus. "I am deeply grateful for the time I've had to partner with these amazing folks in our collective effort to support faculty, staff and students."

Serving as vice president during a time of global and national uncertainty, Hussain acknowledged the challenges of his tenure but noted that the Middlebury community remains committed to fostering inclusivity and care for its members.

"I am grateful for the ways equity and inclusion practitioners showed up to offer spaces of mourning and celebration, dialogue and repair as well as the hundreds of hours our educators committed to inclusive skill building for faculty, staff and students," he wrote.

Hussain shared that despite the transition, he hopes that Middlebury will continue to take into account the needs of its diverse communities and make genuine change on their behalf.

"I recall a moment during a community dialogue, when a student shared that they 'feel seen and valued, but it's not enough," he wrote. "It matters that we acknowledge our community's needs and support one another with empathy. It matters that we demonstrate regard for one another by revising policies and changing behaviors."

The transition comes at a time when Middlebury faces an ongoing antisemitism investigation.

In March 2024, Middlebury received a communication from the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) following a complaint related to antisemitism and has been cooperating with the ongoing investigation. On March 10, 2025, Middlebury was one of 60 institutions to receive a follow-up letter indicating that the investigation would be continued under the current administration.

Hussain acknowledged that any antisemitism reports affect the entire Middlebury community, but added that equity and inclusion practitioners play a significant role in supporting efforts to report incidents of harm and discrimination.

"Over the past two years our office has actively sought ways to support students impacted by antisemitism by holding impact circles, expanding our Community Bias Response capacity and moving forward with a climate assessment on antisemitism alongside a climate assessment on Islamophobia," he wrote. "These assessments were sponsored by Middlebury's Office of the President and explore the experiences of faculty and staff at Middlebury College to increase awareness of respective communities and inform our future policies and practices."

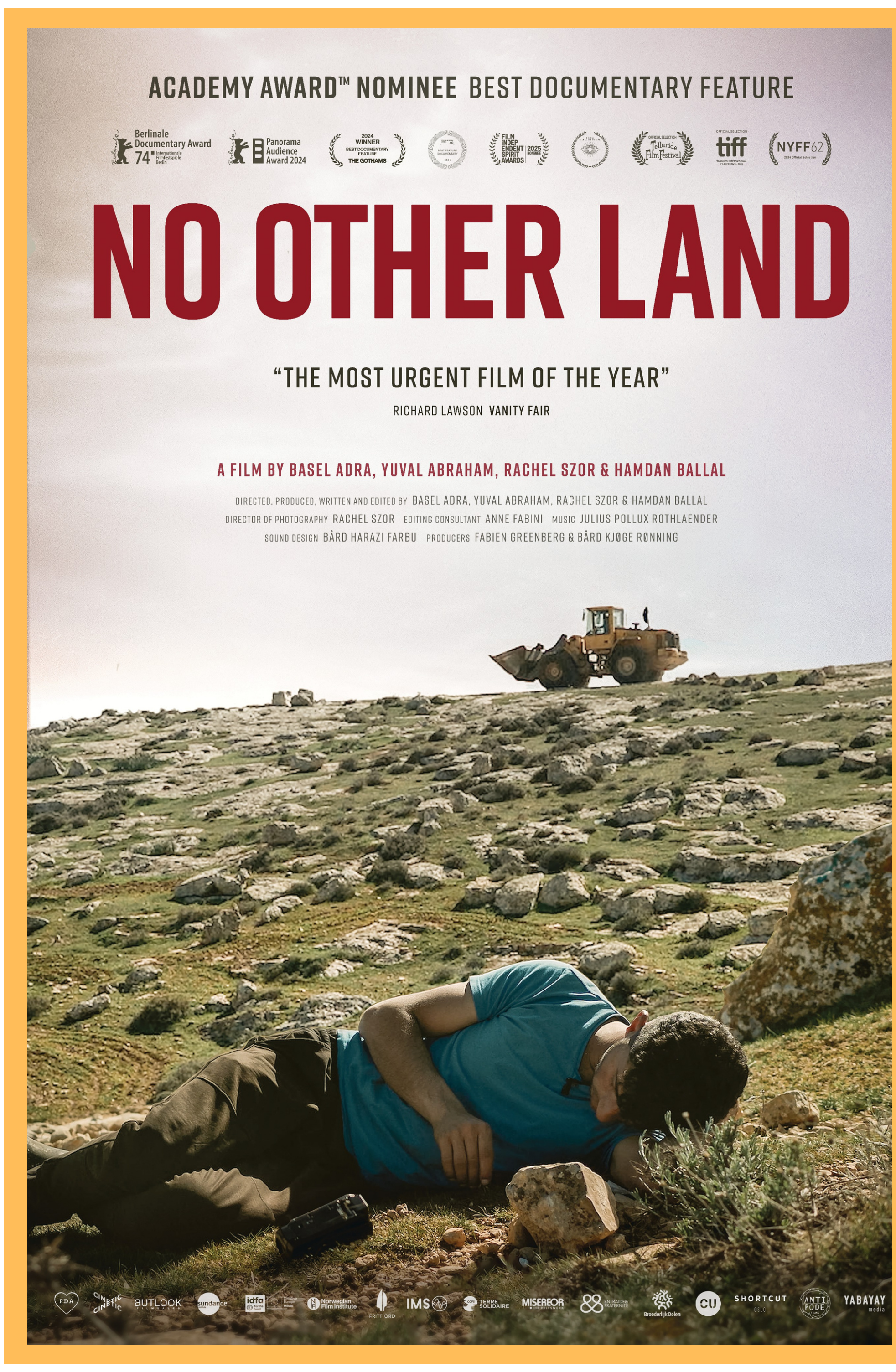
Confronting the current societal conditions, Hussain echoed writer and activist Adrienne Maree Brown's words:, "What we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system."

He expressed that the equity and inclusion work ahead should continue to center on the guiding principles outlined in the Middlebury community's action plan, which he described as fundamentally rooted in collective equity efforts and the advancement of Middlebury's educational mission.

"Middlebury is uniquely situated to build upon years of deep commitments by faculty, staff, students and institutional leaders to foster greater access, inclusion and full participation," he wrote. "We need to hold space for each other's stories; listen and respond with humility and curiosity —- to ensure our institutional values and commitments are modeled in our practices."

Over his three years at Middlebury, Hussain has enjoyed working with his colleagues and students and is excited to return to the classroom to continue providing meaningful educational experiences to Middlebury students.

"I have loved working in creative, values-based environments alongside faculty, students, staff, administrators, alums and board members," he wroteconcluded. "As I transition, I bring lessons and friendships with me to my teaching role at Middlebury and hope to continue to co-create educational experiences from a different perch on the tree."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HIRSCHFIELD

Local school districts express concern over funding cuts to Department of Education

By VIOLET WEXLER
Contributing Writer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COURTESY PHOTO

Vermont educators and school districts brace for uncertainty as sweeping federal layoffs at the Department of Education threaten funding, programs and local autonomy.

Recent cuts to the Department of Education by the Trump administration have shaken local school districts across the country, reaching Addison County schools that have faced declining student enrollment and currently rely on federal funding for a variety of purposes. Superintendents of local school districts have expressed their fears of possible funding cuts and voiced support for Vermont's attempts to fight or impede the looming changes.

Massive cuts to staffing at the Department of Education and the loss of funding such as $1.7 million in Department of Agriculture grants that previously supported schools' local food purchases pose a serious threat to local school districts across the state. The Department of Education not only distributes federal funding but also enforces civil rights laws in schools, oversees funding for low-income students and financially supports students with disabilities.

Vermont's school system has struggled with a decline in student enrollment, which has led to cost inefficiencies in rural areas such as Addison County.

Addison Central School District (ACSD), which serves 1,770 students, relies on federal funding through programs such as IDEA, Title I, Title II and Title III, and Medicaid funding. IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Education Act) ensures students with disabilities receive the appropriate financial support needed. Titles I, II and III mainly focus on supporting districts with low-income students and helping support immigrant students.

Sheila Soule, superintendent of Addison Northwest Unified School District (ANSWD) — which serves 917 students — emphasized that this kind of funding supports critical services for students in need.

"ANWSD receives about five percent of its funding directly from federal sources, which include support for low-income students, special education programs, and other essential services," Soule said in an interview with The Campus."While specific details are still emerging, federal programs such as Title I grants for low-income schools and funding for special education services are at risk."

Since funding is pre-approved for the upcoming school year, school districts are not feeling the immediate effects of changes at the federal level. However, Soule said there is a lot of anxious anticipation and discussion about how it will impact the FY 2026–27 school year.

"The proposed cuts have caused uncertainty among educators statewide. While it's too early to quantify the impact on staff retention, the potential loss of funding for programs and positions is a significant concern for teachers and staff," Soule said.

Vermont Attorney General Charity Clark joined 20 other Democratic attorneys general in filing a federal lawsuit on March 13 against the Trump administration. The lawsuit argues that the layoffs render the Department of Education incapable of fulfilling its legal obligations and that dismantling the agency would require congressional approval.

"I'm hopeful that we can slow action down at the federal level so that we can proceed plan fully through any changes," said Wendy Baker, superintendent of ACSD.

"I support the lawsuit and hope that the impact will delay or halt the dismantling of the DOE," Soule said, agreeing with Baker's position on the threat of federal cuts. "If the feds are not going to support public education, the money should be returned to the state to prop up needed programs and services. We can't continue to pay the same amount of federal tax and get less in return."

The Trump administration's approach may extend beyond defunding. Project 2025 has called for schools to stop educating students about race and for school libraries to be punished if they contain books with transgender issues or content. Such proposals raise concerns about the future of Vermont's curriculum, given the ideological divide between the federal government and state leadership.

Baker suggested that citizens should stay updated with state policies to reduce uncertainty.

"State-level policy choices are important to follow. The state will receive notice first, and how that is handled will determine how much local schools are impacted," Baker said.

Soule added that community engagement will be vital to navigating the challenges posed to local schools by the national political environment.

"The district remains dedicated to providing a high-quality education to all students. While challenges may arise, ANWSD will work collaboratively with the community to navigate these changes and ensure that students' educational experiences remain robust and supportive," she added.

COLE'S FLOWERS CONTINUES TO BLOOM AFTER NEARLY 90 YEARS

By NOOR KHAN
Layout Editor

As real Vermonters know all too well, spring comes in two waves: First, "false spring," tempting those who don't know better than to put their winter clothes back in storage. But then — as we were reminded this past weekend — a few inches of snow extinguishes those hopes. During this waiting period before true spring arrives, it can be nice to make spring happen indoors. For almost 88 years, Cole's Flowers has sought to do exactly that, selling bouquets and arrangements for an array of events in Middlebury year-round.

Since opening at 104 North Pleasant Street in 1937, Cole's has moved locations a few times. Paula Cole has been a fourth-generation owner of the company, now located at 418 Creek Road, since 2005. With the business having traversed from the hands of her great-grandfather to her grandfather's and then to her parents', it seems that a love for selling florals runs in the family.

"When I was growing up, I didn't want to be in this business," Cole said in an interview with The Campus. "So I went off and did my own thing, and then as a young adult, I decided to try working for them to see if I liked it — and yeah, I loved it. I love the creativity, and learning about the flowers and different varieties."

She so greatly enjoyed working at the business, that when her parents closed the store in the fall of 2005, she reopened it just two months later on MacIntyre Lane, where it stayed until moving to its current location just this past November. With the exception of major holidays like Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, and the help of some year-round delivery drivers, Cole answers the phone, processes the flowers and designs every arrangement herself.

In making the store her own, Cole has had to adapt to an online world that her parents did not have to navigate. She estimates that half of her orders are now online rather than over the phone, and she is taking a class on social media advertising in order to best adapt to the technologically advancing business conditions of the time.

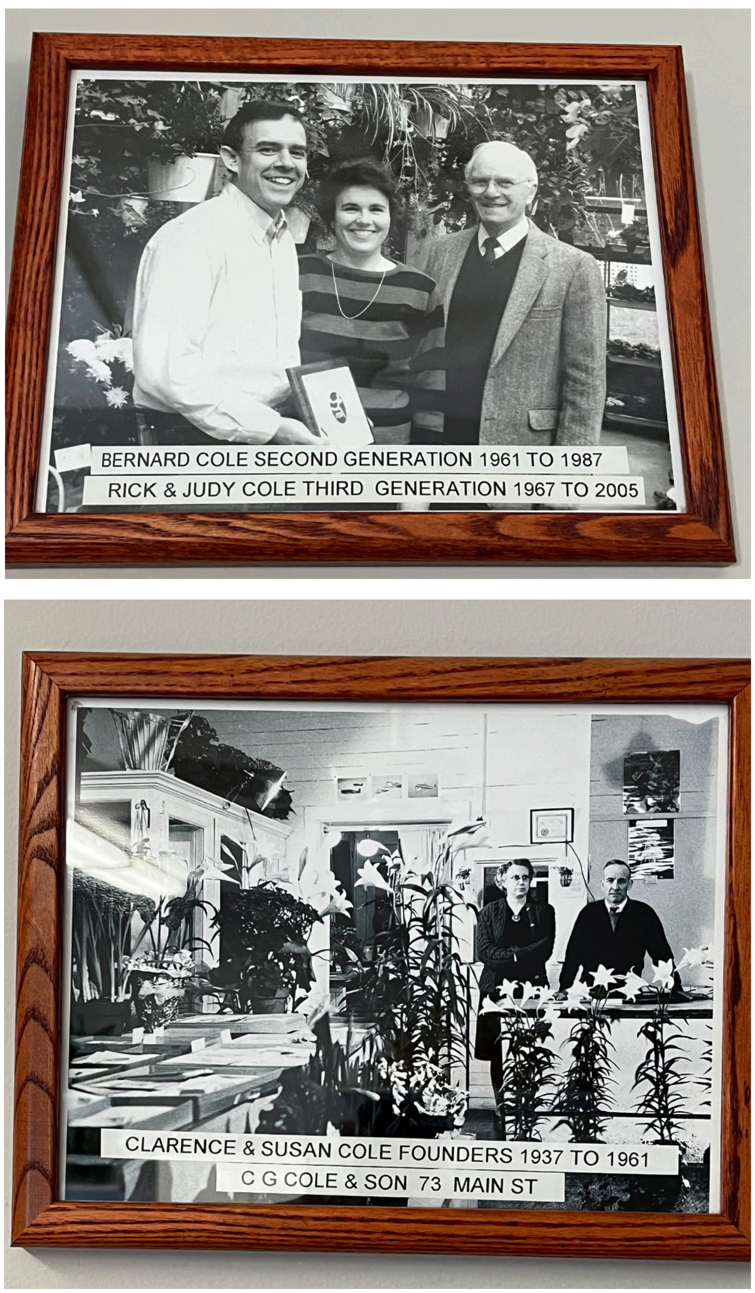
When Cole's Flowers was founded, the flowers were grown in on-site greenhouses — but now, Paula orders from several different wholesalers in South America, California, Canada, Europe and, in the summer, a local grower. Although customers can order any of the pre-designed arrangements pictured on the website, it is also possible to order more personalized ensembles for any occasion.

"I find with funerals that customers want something specific even more, because they want something to represent the person that passed," Paula said. "They'll want to incorporate a personal item, or a favorite color or flower, and I have to figure out the mechanics."

A more general request — like "something springy" — gives Paula some more room to experiment with types of flowers, foliage, and size, making spring in her own image.

NOOR KHAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Cole's Flowers, a fourth-generation family business in Middlebury, has provided year-round floral arrangements for nearly 88 years.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RICK & JUDY COLE THIRD GENERATION 1967 TO 2005
CLARENCE & SUSAN COLE FOUNDERS 1937 TO 1961
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PAULA COLE / COURTESY PHOTOS

The business has moved locations and been passed down to new generations multiple times.

MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTER EXPRESSES SHAREABILITY OF MUSIC

By MADINAH ROSEN
Contributing Writer

To celebrate its students' broad range of instrumental and vocal talent, the Middlebury Community Music Center (MCMC) hosted Bloom and Grow, a pay-what-you-can benefit concert, on Friday, March 28. Proceeds from the concert supported the non-profit's student scholarship fund, improving accessibility to the center for students. The Center, now in its 10th year of operation, aims to cultivate musical talent and encourage the joy, fulfillment and sense of community that students experience through music.

The Center offers four year-round music and voice education programs with over 25 instruments and about 30 talented instructors teaching a variety of genres and styles. The programs are available to a variety of age groups and skill levels, including the private lesson program, summer camp and workshop cohorts, and an early childhood program, promoting foundational musical understanding and development for infants through preschool-age children.

The four programs are open to further expansion, according to Sadie Brightman, the Center's founder and executive director. "We're always looking to expand the reach of our creative impact," she said.

A musician and educator hailing from the local Vermont area, she drew from her insights gained through her background in musical education and performance to bring the Center to life. Her vision was also shaped by her personal connection to fellow teachers and students in the area.

Brightman recalled being inspired as early as her undergraduate years by the power of music to create connection, both internal and communal.

"There's something really special that happens when people are together in that shared vision that this can be for anyone who wants it, and part of the beginning of this vision also came out of my years of teaching and this strong philosophy that I share with other teachers as I started talking to them," Brightman said.

After moving back to the Middlebury area after graduating college, Brightman noticed a lack of accessible musical education for the greater community within Middlebury. The idea for the center solidified one winter afternoon as she approached the yellow brick building on Main Street that housed her small piano studio.

"Once you reach a peak experience with your own music, the natural next step is just to want to share it," Brightman said.

That moment of clarity laid the foundation for what the Middlebury Community Music Center would become. The Center now serves as a space where students can explore their musical potential and build the confidence to share their work with others.

"Our message that we're just trying to yell from our corner of town is that you make music, we make music," Brightman said. "It's something that we can do and we want to encourage the overcoming of barriers and obstacles that we might have about perceiving our own potential in that area."

Accessibility is central to the Center's mission. Their donor-funded scholarship program enables students to acquire financial aid and promotes further participation across the community regardless of financial means.

"The amount of identity transformation that can happen to a person who has something like that to offer to their community is incredible," Brightman said. "It's hard to put it even into words because it doesn't matter who you are or how old you are, it's just this offering that is meaningful."

MCMC emphasizes the importance of guiding students through each step, from small breakthroughs to larger achievements, helping them develop the confidence and skills to share their progress and passion with others.

"It's really for everyone and it's not about talent, it's about the honor of coaching somebody toward their progress one step at a time to see them light up, to see the dots connecting, to see little baby steps of progress that lead to greater outcomes that then can be shared," Brightman said.

MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTER

COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY COMMUNITY MUSIC CENTER

Middlebury Community Music Center marked its 10th anniversary with a concert benefiting its scholarship fund.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE SEEKS LAND AND TIMBER RIGHTS ON SNAKE MOUNTAIN

By LANGAN GARRETT
Staff Writer

In a move to consolidate land and timber rights, the Vermont State Department of Fish and Wildlife has sought to acquire a large parcel of land on Snake Mountain to open for public use and recreational purposes. Snake Mountain Wildlife Management Area currently spans the mountain ridge along the town line of Addison and Weybridge and is one of roughly 100 such areas across the state.

Will Duane, the land acquisition coordinator for the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, manages all of the state's real estate transactions regarding both wildlife management areas and stream-bank area management parcels. As part of his work, Duane has been closely involved in efforts to consolidate ownership at Snake Mountain, which he said was a project with roots going back several decades.

"The property was sold back to the state in the late 1950s, early 1960s, by the A. Johnson Timber Company," Duane said. "At the time, the wildlife management area was established, but the A. Johnson Timber Company retained for themselves the right to harvest all the timber and trees, on around 950 acres of the land. The effort has been to acquire those timber rights in the instances in which we don't have them."

Across Vermont, there are about 15 wildlife areas where the department owns land without owning its timber rights, as these two entities are legally separable and can be severed from land interest.

"The A. Johnson Company is now interested in selling the timber rights as well as two properties they own in the town of Addison and in the town of Weybridge," Duane said. "In addition to that, we will be receiving via donation two properties in the town of Addison that the Nature Conservancy owns… this will allow us to gain more site control with the acquisition of the timber rights."

Hannah Redmon, a project manager on the Land Protection team at Trust for Public Land, has been working in Vermont with a focus on the Green Mountains and communities across the state. Redmon emphasized the ecological benefits of consolidating land and timber rights under one public agency.

"Since the timber rights are currently owned by a private company, they are managing the timber to harvest it for profit. They are also trying to be good, responsible stewards of the land," Redmon told The Campus. "But when Fish and Wildlife owns those timber rights, they will be able to manage the land and the timber rights together, and manage them for the land, the wildlife and the recreation. So having one ownership of the timber rights and the land allows for more cohesive management."

The Department of Fish and Wildlife's broader mission to expand and unify wildlife management areas is an ongoing effort that will enable increased public access and recreational use across the state.

"Hunting, trapping, angling… hiking, snow-shoing, anything low impact and dispersed is encouraged and allowed on all of our lands," Duane said. "We are adding all the time to our public land holdings."

The presence of federally endangered bat species on several of these properties has also helped streamline the acquisition process, as protecting the critical habitat for these species has provided additional leverage and justification for state involvement.

"We have applied for a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve the habitat for these bat species, and we have received a grant award from the Vermont Conservation Board for the acquisition of these properties," Duane said.

COURTESY PHOTO / VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF DISH AND WILDLIFE

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife is working to acquire timber rights on Snake Mountain to unify land management and expand public access and conservation efforts.

MIDDLEBURY MAY BE NEXT ON TRUMP'S CHOPPING BLOCK. WHAT NOW?

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Since our last editorial on the topic of the Trump administration and its impact on Middlebury College, the onslaught against higher education has continued. One of the most concerning actions has been the withdrawal of federal funding from several colleges and universities under the rationale of open antisemitism investigations under Title XI. Columbia University has been the main target of this tightening, with $400 million being withheld unless the school falls in line with federal mandates on its curriculum, university-wide policies for protests, and conservative ideologies. The usurpation of higher education's independence directly threatens academic freedom by forcing compliance to certain standards and limiting opportunities of free expression.

Middlebury may be next on Trump's chopping block. We are one of 60 colleges who received a letter warning against antisemitism last month, and in its silence on the destruction of higher education, Middlebury has largely admitted an unspoken truth: we cannot stop the wrecking ball that may be coming for our institution, our classrooms and most importantly our students.

The situation of international and undocumented students feels especially precarious, which is highly relevant to a school that prides itself on its cultural diversity and rigorous language and study abroad programs. The detainment of a Turkish graduate student from Tufts University after she denounced the university's support of Israel in an op-ed in the Tufts Daily was especially alarming and reminds us that NESCAC schools — and student newspapers such as our own — are not immune to the unpredictable scrutiny of the Trump administration.

Middlebury is within the 100-mile border zone of Canada, exposing us to border enforcement in a unique way, since there is a high likelihood of the presence of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in our community. ICE agents were recently spotted at Porter Hospital, and they may soon be on campus in public spaces. Many international students have been advised to carry personal identification documents as well as immigration documents.

Middlebury College owes its students a level of transparency and accountability it is currently missing in order to uphold its central promise to its students: safety during their four years on campus here, no matter visas, immigration status or other aspects of their identity. The Trump administration has pushed us into uncharted territory with its attack on higher education, and there is no right answer at this moment.

The vastly different approaches of various colleges — from Columbia's submission to Wesleyan's fiery president writing defenses of academia in the New York Times — forces us to reflect on our own uniquely transitional moment as we move to new leadership this summer. While this may inspire and allow the administration to keep a low profile, it does not mean we will accept a lack of assertiveness and accountability.

We understand the college has fallen back on its "three pillars": the right of academic freedom, the responsibility of personal and professional integrity and the value of respect. However, it is not enough to simply restate these ideas — especially when these are ideas that few, if any, students have seriously heard before now. When our so-called fundamental pillars are under threat by investigations, deportations and funding cuts, the college also has a duty to defend its principles.

Faculty and students should not be passive actors in this either. Professors, when comfortable, should offer themselves as resources to students by having in-class conversations about what this new reality means and allowing such conversations to continue in office hours. Students also have a responsibility to educate themselves about their rights when dealing with law enforcement and best practices — it is no longer acceptable to rely on the Middlebury bubble to protect us.

We understand from the very end of the same email that outlined the "three pillars" that several functions of the Office of Institutional Diversity, Enquiry and Inclusion (OIDEI) will be relocated to Student Affairs and the Office of General Counsel. The college is likely making a tactical readjustment as other universities have in recent weeks, yet it appears unable to admit the dismantling of a core department in the school-wide email that left the matter so vague that no one truly understood what its future held.

If the college preaches the value of respect, it should respect the student body enough to explain clearly why such changes are necessary and whether key resources like Title XI office or the Anderson Freeman Center (AFC) will be damaged in the transition. Currently, Middlebury seems terrified of subpoenas that will dredge up these kinds of administrative messages as fodder for a congressional hearing or federal investigation. Such paralysis is harmful to students, who want the college to maintain its commitment to a welcoming campus environment even in the face of scrutiny.

We recognize that the situation is still unpredictable. There is not a set path with the right approach, and we must tread lightly. We are aware that most of the exchange of information is happening behind closed doors, with questions being directed towards the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and the Office of General Counsel.

There could be greater transparency from the administration and more salient efforts to educate the student body through emails, workshops, posters and other measures to allow students to feel as safe as possible. The administration has supplied faculty and staff with notecards and other resources explaining what to do if an ICE agent walks through the door of a classroom, but there are no prominent, public resources available for students to rely on in that kind of situation.

At the end of the day, Middlebury needs to make calculated decisions to not only protect the safety of students and faculty but also our academic institutions. There are limitations to what we can do, but inaction is not an answer.

The college's first priority should be the people it is charged with protecting on campus. This means we should not only foster an atmosphere of creativity, innovation and diversity of thought, but one prepared to withstand attacks to dismantle it.

WHY THE SOLIDARITY GROUP "MIGRANT JUSTICE AT MIDD" MATTERS

Op-Ed

Charlotte Roberts *is a member of the class of 2025.5 and an Opinions Editor.*

If you walked into Proctor or Ross dining hall on Thursday for lunch last week, you probably saw a couple students tabling outside to promote the Migrant Justice Milk with Dignity campaign. On that day, around 80 Middlebury students called Hannaford Supermarket to demand the grocery store chain join the Milk with Dignity program and guarantee humane working and living conditions for the farm workers that produce their dairy products — many of whom are undocumented immigrants.

Migrant Justice is an organization based in Vermont that works "to build the voice, capacity, and power of the immigrant farmworker community to organize for economic justice and human rights." This spring, Middlebury students re-started Migrant Justice at Midd (MJ@M), an independent group that supports Migrant Justice's campaigns. In a time of increased fear surrounding the Trump administration's targeted attacks against undocumented people, Migrant Justice at Midd, through a combination of advocacy, community building, education and direct support, provides a compelling opportunity for concrete solidarity work with the immigrant community of Vermont.

As many Middlebury students are frequent customers of Hannaford's, it is essential to consider the labor conditions out of which the products we purchase arise. We cannot allow the mediating factors of a few delivery trucks to separate us from the concrete reality of the lives of the people who produce our food.

Furthermore, this solidarity work with Migrant Justice is an essential response to the Trump administration's targeting of undocumented people, particularly those who speak out in resistance to authoritarianism and state violence. Just last week, Alfredo "Lelo" Juarez, a farmworker activist in Washington was detained by ICE. The fear generated by these targeted attacks is isolating and paralyzing, and this can function to silence people. This is what it's designed to do. By organizing in solidarity — as Migrant Justice at Midd has done — we can work together to build networks that fortify the communities of Vermont.

In 2009, José Obeth Santiz Cruz, an 18-year-old Vermont dairy farm employee was killed in a workplace accident by a machine lacking adequate safety equipment. The network of people who worked to return his body to his home in Chiapas led to the formation of Migrant Justice. Over its short history, the organization has won numerous successful campaigns that have improved the lives of dairy farm workers and the wider immigrant community in Vermont. Because of their work, anyone in the state of Vermont regardless of immigration status can get a driver's license and receive healthcare through the state. Immigration agents are no longer allowed to detain people while they are visiting the courthouse for a hearing, and the Fair and Impartial Policing Act severely limits the ability of ICE officers and local law enforcement to cooperate with each other. These are the impacts of just a few of Migrant Justice's successful campaigns.

A 2014 survey put out by Migrant Justice found that "on average, farmworkers work 60–80 hours a week" oftentimes in substandard and dangerous conditions. Many migrant dairy workers are paid below the Vermont minimum wage, and some have had their pay illegally withheld. In response, Migrant Justice created the Milk with Dignity Program. The Milk with Dignity program demands that food industry leaders source their milk while complying with dairy workers' human rights, improving labor conditions, and offsetting the associated cost by paying farmers premium prices for milk.

DIGNITY TOUR
Hannaford
@Migrant Justice VT
→HANNAFORD JOIN #MILK WITH DIGNITY!

COURTESY PHOTO / NANCY RIVERA

Migrant Justice protested outside Hannaford Supermarket in April 2023.

After three years of campaigning, in 2017, Ben & Jerry's signed onto the Milk with Dignity campaign, becoming the first major dairy corporation to join the program. Ben and Jerry's committed to requiring its supplying farms to comply with the organization's Code of Conduct that ensures the human rights of dairy workers. In 2019, Migrant Justice turned its sights toward the Hannaford franchise and began a campaign to pressure the corporation to join the Milk with Dignity program to fundamentally improve the lives of the workers whose labor produces their profits. Migrant Justice is asking Hannaford customers to fill out their Consumer Pledge for Farmworker Rights. As the next campaign step, they are encouraging people to save and document Hannaford receipts to build consumer purchasing power and show just how much money the franchise would lose with a potential boycott. To sign the pledge and submit your receipts, fill out this form.

In the pre-Covid-19 universe, Middlebury had an active Migrant Justice solidarity group on campus. It's been in dormancy over the past couple years, but this winter and spring has seen a resurgence of energy for organizing with Migrant Justice on campus. The group, which meets weekly on Mondays, has held three Milk with Dignity call-in days over the course of the spring so far, hosted a movie screening of the film "La Cosecha," continued coordination to provide transportation, childcare, and direct support for Migrant Justice and attended a community-building and campaign-sharing dinner with Migrant Justice leaders. In the upcoming weeks, they are hosting a movie screening of Migrant Justice Films, planning a creative project for Nocturne, collaborating with other student groups such as Juntos, and organizing Middlebury student transportation to the Migrant Justice May Day 16-hour picket rally at the Hannaford in Williston on May 1. To get involved, sign up for the group's newsletter, follow them on instagram @ migrantjusticemidd, or just come to a Monday meeting!

Migrant Justice at Midd's aim to focus their efforts on solidarity means they only support and participate in action-steps already set up by Migrant Justice, understanding that, while Middlebury students and immigrant dairy farm workers are positioned differently in the system of capital that relies on the violent extraction of labor, our liberation from that system is intertwined.

The Middlebury Campus

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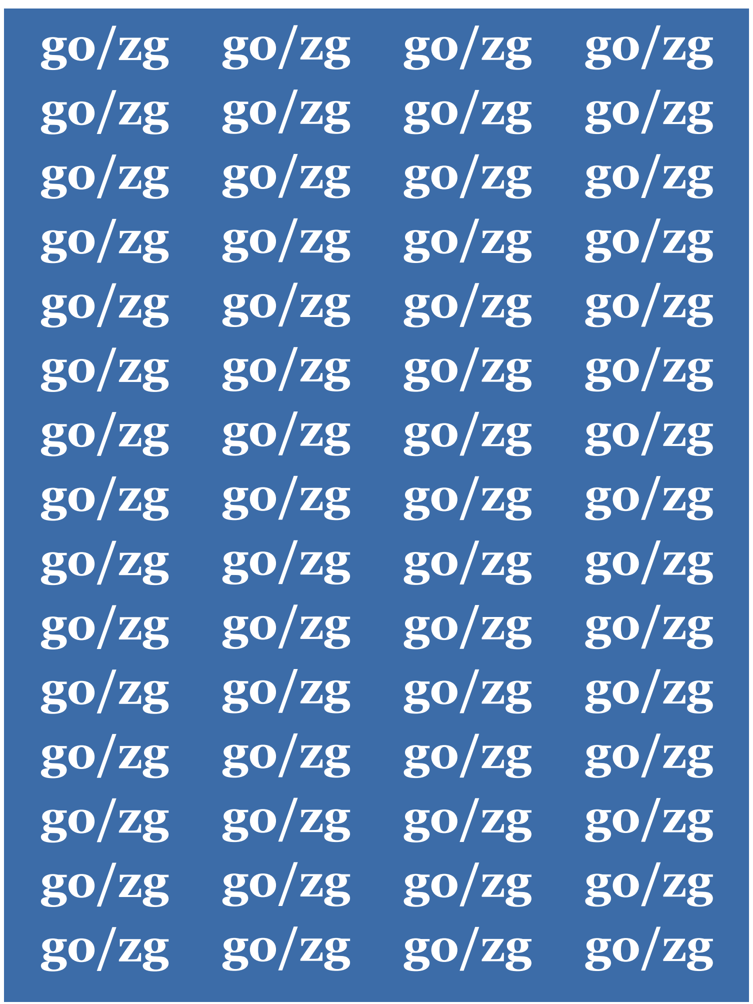
The Middlebury Campus

After seven years, why Zeitgeist?

Notes from the Desk

Ryan McElroy *is a member of the class of 2025 and the Editor in Chief.*



THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / RYAN MCELROY

Zeitgeist 7.0 opened on Monday, March 31 and will run for two weeks through April 14. Take the survey at go/zg/.

The Campus just launched its annual student survey on Monday, March 31, marking the seventh time we have asked Middlebury students to answer dozens of questions about academics, sex and love, social life, politics and other topics. Last year we received completed responses from over 1,200 students; this data has become a touchstone for our reporting on Middlebury's community, and it has shaped how faculty, staff and administrators understand the student body.

The survey is currently open and will run through Monday, April 14 at midnight. You can access Zeitgeist here or at go/zeitgeist/ and as a reward for completing the survey, we are holding a raffle for hundreds of dollars in rewards. We've added new questions this year: Have you ever been in love while at Middlebury? Do you value Middlebury's national ranking? How would you describe the college's political environment?

As former Editor in Chief and Zeitgeist founder Bochu Ding '21 wrote in 2019, Zeitgeist makes an earnest effort to answer questions on identity, student culture and politics that are "left undiscussed because they are uncomfortable, nuanced and often difficult to approach." We do not promise the survey is perfect; just last week I realized a question that could have been cut three years ago had unwittingly survived until now. Instead of perfection, we hope it informs productive, evidence-based conversations about the Middlebury community.

The value of Zeitgeist is not only as a passing curiosity or pure entertainment. Rather, the survey represents our best effort to make an empirical, quantitative study of the Middlebury student body at a specific moment in time. We use Qualtrics, Datawrapper and occasionally R to interrogate, analyze and visualize the thousands of responses we receive each spring, participating in a larger trend in the past 15 years that emphasizes data journalism.

While the college has its own data on the student body, we make all of our results publicly available. Furthermore, The Campus is committed to publishing the data no matter how it reflects on particular departments and specific majors, the institution as a whole or us as a student body — for evidence of that, just see our graphs that show an increasing number of students breaking the Honor Code each year.

The reporting we do in our annual student survey has real-world implications, too. Those questions on the Honor Code, A.I. and academic integrity have shaped conversations among faculty and administrators surrounding revisions to institutional policies. Our reporting has also gained attention beyond the borders of our campus: I've received inquiries from editors at other student publications who want to start their own student surveys modeled on Zeitgeist, and the data we collect has been cited in national publications such as the Atlantic.

No matter how the statistics are used, Zeitgeist provides a unique opportunity for students to share information anonymously that would otherwise be swept under the rug. This principle applies to our questions on sexual assault at Middlebury, which is routinely underreported to the Title XI office, as well as suicide and other topics in our Safety & Wellness section. All of this provides insight into the lesser-known areas of student life that will not be found in an admissions brochure or federally-mandated disclosures. Even the lighter questions about intimacy, sex and sexual orientation speak to important aspects of our lives that are not often talked about openly on campus.

On a personal level, Zeitgeist has also defined my time at Middlebury. This is my third and final year running the survey; planning has to start in early March, running through a nine-week schedule entailing hundreds of hours of emailing, brainstorming, writing, editing and analyzing data from over a dozen of our editors across all six sections that culminates on publication day in early May. I had never done any statistical analysis before joining Zeitgeist, and I had no experience with survey design or data analysis — almost everyone on our staff majors in the humanities. Running this project has challenged me to leave the written comfort zone of my history major, and as I look to hand off the work to our younger editors, I know my quantitative forays have been a formative part of my college education.

Whether you think of this survey as a fun, momentary distraction at lunch in Proc or your chance to voluntarily write essay-length responses to our wrap-up question, you are contributing something valuable to our endeavor to understand Middlebury College. So take some time this week or next to look through Zeitgeist 7.0 and submit your answers by April 14 at midnight.

Part of the beauty of Zeitgeist is inherent to its definition — as a moment in time, a temporary window into student life and culture at the college. Our survey is not an experimental research project on Middlebury students, nor the all-encompassing nature of college-collected data.

To see official statistics and institution-wide trends, look to the college's website. To understand the attitude of students, our passions and pastimes, love lives and changed minds — to see the pressing issues and the not-so pressing issues alike — look to Zeitgeist.

SPOILER ALERT: THE LANGUAGE PLEDGE IS NOT WHAT IMPROVED MY FRENCH DURING MY SEMESTER ABROAD

Op-Ed

Maya Alexander *is a member of the class of 2026 and an Opinions Editor.*

I'm shocked when I hear accounts of other American undergraduate students' time abroad, learning nothing more than how to say "merci" while in Paris. As I wrapped up my semester abroad this past December in Bordeaux, France, I could safely say that my French improved exponentially and that there was value in the intense and immersive qualities of the Middlebury program, which is known for its notorious Language Pledge requiring students to only speak in their target language. I lived with a host family and was directly enrolled at the local university, taking courses any native student would take. I successfully blended into the lecture halls, challenging the stereotype that American exchange students can only speak English.

I'm thankful that my college makes sure its students will truly make an effort to understand another culture by requiring a certain level of language proficiency to be able to study abroad. However, I wonder if the Language Pledge is completely necessary to improve language proficiency and if it's fair to require it for all students alike. Moreover, the requirements to go abroad in the first place are not always reasonable.

Middlebury should continue to instill a certain level of language requirements while abroad to ensure we are immersed with the local culture and languages, but there should be more flexibility. Not all students studying abroad have the same goals, nor come from the same backgrounds. Some go abroad to commit to not speaking a lick of English, while others may be more focused on meeting new people from across the globe or simply experience living in a different place, as it might be their first time outside of the U.S..

For students who come in without prior knowledge of their language of choice, the amount of financial investment and time commitment required at Middlebury to go abroad in their chosen language is also hypocritical for a school that prides itself on curiosity, exploration and language learning. If students start a language any later than their very first semester, enrolling in Middlebury's summer Language Schools is the only way to get ahead in languages. Febs have no choice but to do so, as 101 level courses are almost always only taught in the fall.

Language Schools are not included in our tuition — the Spanish Language School, for example, costs approximately $12,000 and the maximum need-based grant is $5,500. Many students I know who are Febs have decided not to go abroad in a foreign language-speaking country because they cannot or are unwilling to pay a significant extra amount of money for a language education that should be achievable as part of their academic year package.

While I was lucky to already have 10 years of French education under my belt before going to Bordeaux, the program was still undeniably challenging for me. It was no small feat to keep up with a lecture about the French constitution at twice the speed of the French I had heard in classrooms back home. I couldn't begin to imagine what this was like for students who had started learning French just two years prior upon arriving at Middlebury as a first year. Despite our different levels of experience, they were held to the same expectations as I was — we couldn't take even one course in English that was offered by the university.

Of course, if there was no language pledge, what would incentivize students to speak as much of the target language as possible? This is a fair question, but it was not the Language Pledge that truly forced me to speak French, but the situations where I simply had no other choice. Through conversations with my Middlebury peers, it seems that there is a collective commitment among students who want to go abroad to increase their proficiency in the language. I wouldn't imagine that any of my peers would've barged into a local café, asking if the barista spoke English.

My improvement in French proficiency was not thanks to the Language Pledge: I owe my growth to basic social sensitivity and curiosity. The Middlebury program did a great job of encouraging us to maximize the amount of French we were exposed to through listening to French media and continuing to speak in French even if someone switched into English after hearing an American accent.

While I was initially skeptical about being placed in a 15-person seminar designed for only local students, I was ultimately appreciative that I was forced to interact with local students who only spoke French with me. Given the intensity of my academics, did I really need to worry that speaking to fellow Americans in English would take away from the great amount of progress I made each week speaking French?

I can attest to the fact that it is mentally and emotionally tiring to try to communicate in a second language. We should continue to challenge ourselves and confront very real stereotypes of American students abroad. However, it shouldn't come at the expense of not being able to decompress with conversations in English with our friends from home, or, frankly, feel like we are being watched like children if we speak a bit of English.

There must be some loosening of the requirements across the board. This doesn't need to come at the cost of sending less experienced students abroad, but perhaps the entry requirements for the program could be altered. Then, Middlebury could create different tracks that students can choose to take in their host city. For example, there could be one track for those who want to speak no English at all and one track that allows students to select a mix of courses in their target language and in English. In this case, they won't fear retaliation for occasionally speaking in English, especially if they only started learning the language two years prior and couldn't afford to attend Language Schools. Even with altered requirements, a student's language proficiency is bound to improve during their time abroad.

THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / MAYA ALEXANDER

The view from a day trip to Bayonne during my semester abroad in Bordeaux, France.

GOOD THINGS COME IN FOURS: ISIDORE STRING QUARTET DELIVERS CAPTIVATING DEBUT

By YUHAN ZHANG
Staff Writer

Isidore String Quartet made a memorable debut at Mahaney Arts Center's Olin C. Robison Concert Hall on March 28. The ensemble, comprising violinists Adrian Steele and Phoenix Avalon, violist Devin Moore, and cellist Joshua McClendon, presented a program with works by Mozart, Billy Childs and Beethoven. The concert was organized by the Sunderman Family Concert Endowment Fund, which ensured free admission for all attendees.

The Isidore String Quartet is known for its fresh approach to the string quartet repertoire. Formed in 2019 in New York City, the quartet has rapidly gained acclaim, winning the 14th Banff International String Quartet Competition in August 2022.

"I had the distinct pleasure of being present when they won the competition, and the audience was certainly amazed by them all week long," said Allison Coyne Carroll, director of the Middlebury Performing Arts series. "This is the start of a relationship with the Isidore Quartet, as we'll be welcoming the Quartet back next season for a Music Accord Commission performance, the world premiere of a new Billy Child's work."

The evening started with Mozart's String Quartet No. 19 in C Major, K. 465, known as the "Dissonance" quartet. A work dedicated to Haydn, this is one of Mozart's boldest pieces, as it contains many unsettling dissonances. The quartet's interpretation highlighted the piece's intricate harmonies and dynamic contrasts, beginning the night on a strong note.

The second piece was the highlight of the evening: "String Quartet No. 3 'Unrequited'" by six-time Grammy-winning jazz pianist and composer Billy Childs. The work, inspired by the unrequited love of Czech composer Leoš Janáček for Kamila Stösslová, is a five-movement journey through a variety of emotions — from romantic, pure love, to paranoid, obsessive, neurotic possessiveness to despondent acceptance.

"We not only had the privilege of working on Billy's music, but getting to know him as a real-life person," violist Devin Moore said. "It is such a joy to be able to ask questions, to be able to know what he's like. It informs the way we interpret his music."

He proceeded to read a note of Billy Childs' which detailed the story behind the composition.

"I wanted to illustrate my perspective on this strange relationship between Janáček and Kamila Stösslová by telling the story of a man who goes through different phases of emotion before finally coming to terms with the fact that his love for her is one sided. I sought to compose unrequitedly so that it moves like the five stages of grief through a variety of emotions," Moore read out loud.

Moore said that Childs' compositions are special because he combines multiple elements of classical and jazz music that forms his own unique voice.

The concert concluded with Beethoven's String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Op. 127. Written during Beethoven's final creative period, the piece is notable for its grandeur, emotional depth and innovative structure. The quartet delivered a performance that balanced the work's architectural brilliance with its lyrical tenderness, showcasing their technical prowess and interpretative insight. The finale of this piece was particularly notable, featuring a "fake ending" where the music paused and teased a conclusion, leaving the audience in laughter.

With their dynamic interpretations and compelling stage presence, the Isidore String Quartet's Middlebury debut was a resounding success, leaving listeners eagerly anticipating their return next season.

COURTESY PHOTO / YUHAN ZHANG

The Isidore String Quartet played at Robison Concert Hall this past Friday.

HANNAH SMITH ALLEN GOES "BEYOND WALLS" TO UNCOVER AMERICAN LANDSCAPES AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN NEW JOHNSON GALLERY EXHIBIT

By MAYA ALEXANDER
Opinions Editor

Hannah Smith Allen's photography exhibition "Beyond Walls" opened on Tuesday, March 11 with a lecture and opening reception in Johnson Memorial Building. The exhibition — which will run until April 5 — includes works made during President Donald Trump's first term as a method of interpreting, interrupting and engaging with America's landscapes and its complex political systems.

Allen is a photographer and associate professor of Art and Art History at Adelphi University. She believes the power of art lies in depicting what is going on in the world and providing commentary on it.

"The world is something to notice, to celebrate, to comment on, and to criticize. It is not stagnant," Allen's biography from Adelphi states.

During her talk, which was sponsored by the Studio Art Department, Allen discussed how her undergraduate studies at Rhode Island School of Design informed her understanding of the role of photography today. In college, she said she was taught that "artists make art because they have something to say," which did not resonate with her.

Instead, Allen learned to create less intentional work when attending the School of Visual Arts for graduate school. She began thinking about how people respond to events with photography and how information is relayed, sparking her ongoing interest in how places have been politicized and militarized.

In the Johnson Gallery are selected photographs from two past projects, "Borderlands" and "Battlegrounds," as well as three new pieces: a video installation titled "Dream States (U.S./MX)," a panorama image of the U.S. southern borderlands that spans over two lightboxes and a projection piece titled "Paper Ghosts" that showcases historic war objects projected onto recent articles from the New York Times.

"Together, the works in Beyond Walls resist a single, narrative reading. Instead, these works offer viewers different visions of sites of conflict," Allen wrote in an email to The Campus.

"Borderlands" documents both the virtual and physical U.S.-Mexico border. After the 2016 presidential election, Allen noticed that the viewer can slip in and out of the wall on Google Maps' street view, a perfect symbol of the malleable and mythical qualities of the border history of the U.S. Following this discovery, Allen travelled in-person to the U.S. southern border to photograph the landscape herself. "Dream States," the stop-motion video, reveals moments on Google when the wall breaks down and the camera moves between the two countries.

The other works take a more introspective, reflective tone. In "Target Practice," viewers see their own reflection in the military targets that Allen fabricated from acrylic mirrors. In "Paper Ghosts," shadowy visions from past wars haunt contemporary news stories, pieces that many community members might remember reading themselves in the past year.

The multimedia and sometimes abstract qualities of all the exhibition's components allow the viewer to engage with the works at their own pace and order. There was no sense of 'here' and 'there' in her work — the representations of borders are fluid through the video work as well as the silk screening on her photographs that turn the work from a single photograph to a more abstract multimedia piece. Silk screening uses a mesh screen, stencil and ink to transfer an image onto a surface, creating bold and layered final products. Walking through the gallery, I felt that Allen sought to produce work stemming from a multitude of responses to our ongoing political crises regarding immigration and the borders.

"I don't think art — at least my art — is supposed to provide answers, especially to some of these big geopolitical questions. And I certainly do not want to minimize the complexity of these situations," Allen wrote. She added that her goal is to spark conversations and introspection among the students and community who visit her installation this month.

"Instead, my hope is that people walk away from the exhibition thinking more deeply about conflict, land, and politics and how all these subjects have been conventionally depicted. If my art can get people to talk, debate and think, it is working," she added.

THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / ELLIE TRINKLE

Hannah Smith Allen's exhibit "Beyond Walls" in Johnson Gallery.

MAKES YA FEEL: MARCH MOVIE MADNESS

By ELLIE TRINKLE
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

Gallery hoppers, Spotify stalkers, bookworms, Letterboxd users and anyone who enjoys art, this is the place for you. Makes Ya Feel highlights art across all of its mediums, small and large-scale, that (you guessed it) makes ya feel!

March is usually a time of transition; spring slowly creeps in and as the days get longer, we finally begin to feel hopeful for the warmer days that lie ahead. But in Vermont, March often marks another month of winter, sometimes with a few surprising warm days (which are quickly followed by snowy, disillusioning ones).

During a lot of my free time this month, I found myself wanting to do nothing more than curl up and watch a movie. The 12 films I watched all vary across genres, time periods and overall content, but here are the three that stuck out and got me through this mercurial March.

"A Complete Unknown" — James Mangold

This 2024 musical drama is a portrait of Bob Dylan as he navigates the folk music scene in 1960s New York City. I watched this film while home for a weekend with my parents, who were excited to learn more about an artist that defined so much of their childhood.

I tend to be a bit more hesitant towards musician biopics, as they are usually poorly received because they alter real events at the expense of the lives of others. However, "A Complete Unknown" surprised me. It was fun to watch and never felt like its narrative was harmful towards the artists themselves or the people in their life. Maybe that's because the film is not very plot heavy and instead depicts vignettes from parts of Dylan's life. There is no overarching commentary about Dylan that is trying to be made, no attempts to "redeem him," — he is depicted as a complex individual whose ambition sometimes disrupts his relationships.

Timothée Chalamet plays Dylan, and, though I was initially skeptical, he portrays the singer superbly. Every concert scene feels so intimate, and the love-triangle between Dylan, Joan Baez and Sylvie Russo creates memorable moments of tension and pain. The physical setting of 1960s New York City is its own character that reflects the political environment of the time and challenges the other characters to take a stand.

The film, with its engaging visuals and complex narrative, was just what I needed to start my March out on the right foot.

SKILES ROBERTS-SALVADOR

Bunny Lake is Missing — Otto Preminger

I watched "Bunny Lake is Missing" for one of my Film Theory class screenings, and that Monday night my classmates and I were gasping and shouting as the film unfolded. The film, which is shot completely in black and white, was released in 1975 and has been considered a "cult classic" ever since.

The film mainly explores the theme of unreliable narratives. When Bunny, a little girl from America, goes missing on her first day of school in London, her mother Ann and uncle Steven attempt to solve the mystery and find Bunny. During their search, law enforcement begin questioning if Bunny is even real or if she is instead a figment of Ann's imagination. The film's huge twist at the end is shocking, and puts into question the truthfulness of each individual character.

With its gloomy and complex shots, the film creates an environment that reflects the anguish of losing a child. As the film progresses, reality is blurred and it becomes difficult to trust anyone. But it's impossible to look away, the film grabs you from the opening sequence and does not let you go until the end credits roll, making it such a compelling and memorable part of my March.

"Celine and Julie Go Boating" — Jacques Rivette

This 1974 comedic fantasy film follows magician Celine and librarian Julie and their adventures around Paris; they explore a haunted house, solve a murder mystery and find the joy in female friendship. The film is nonsensical at times, but this allows the story's playful nature to shine through.

Celine and Julie first cross paths in a park in Paris and quickly become friends. Very little context is given as to who either woman is or what they are doing in the park, and instead, the film focuses on the friendship that develops and the liberation that emerges from their relationship.

Though the women differ greatly from one another — Julie is a bit more reserved and Celine is very eccentric and "out there" — they find joy within each other. Some of my favorite parts of the film were when there was nothing else happening but the two women laughing with each other. It felt so genuine, and in a film where reality is blurred, these moments were so grounding and special.

At a little over three hours long, the film is certainly a timely commitment. I split it up into three parts, watching about an hour at a time, and I found myself excited to return during my time apart from it. The Parisian summer days mixed with the whimsical adventures Celine and Julie embark on created a strong warmth that was impossible to look away from.

As the credits rolled and the snow outside my window continued to fall, I sat there smiling, thinking about all of Celine and Julie's warmth and laughter. Maybe waiting for spring isn't so bad after all.

REEL CRITIC: PELIKAN BLUE IS A MASTERPIECE OF POST-IRON CURTAIN FREEDOM, FORGERY AND HOPE

By WENDY WANG
Online Editor

The first full-length animated Hungarian documentary "Pelikan Blue" directed by László Csáki greeted an eager audience of town members and students in a packed Dana Auditorium on March 27. The film shares its name with a type of ink, Pelikan Blue, which plays a critical role in the plot due to its easy removability, facilitating the fabrication of train tickets.

"Pelikan Blue" is based on true accounts gathered through interviews about ticket forgery in Hungary after the fall of the Iron Curtain, which had long restricted international travel to Western Europe. The film tells the story of three main characters — teenagers Ákos, Laci and Petya — who dream of traveling abroad but cannot afford the expensive ticket prices. Eventually, they discover and master the technique of ticket forgery, aided by the removable Pelikan Blue ink. As tales of their travels spread, they are drawn into a career of forgery, helping fellow Hungarians travel abroad while constantly fearing the prosecution of the state and law enforcement.

Set in 1980s and 1990s Hungary, which had just started opening up after 40 years of communist rule, the film begins with the country's transition to and slow incorporation of capitalism. This shift created new freedoms which were previously restricted, beginning with the opening up of borders and allowing for international travel to a once unreachable Western Europe.

"Pelikan Blue" seamlessly merges the story of the three main characters with interviews recalling these past events, creating a thrilling visual and auditory experience that blends past with present.

One of the documentary's most compelling features is its use of voiceover. According to producer Ádám Felszeghy, the narration is entirely sourced from interviews featuring authentic stories of forgery and experiences of buyers, initially recorded for research purposes. The film jumps through time, supplementing the narrative of Ákos, Laci and Petya with commentary from other relevant individuals who were implicated in the forgery. This results in a dynamic dialogue, adding to the film's vibrancy and intrigue. For instance, after Ákos, Laci and Petya start forging tickets for others, the scene shifts to an interview with the three characters in the present, reflecting on their decisions, followed by comments from their customers explaining how they could not afford real tickets and thus saw fake ones as a viable option.

The documentary's inventive use of animation alongside found and real footage further enhances its storytelling, taking advantage of both the imaginative, artistic and metaphoric potential of animation and the realistic authenticity of videos. The animation also provides a creative way for participants to remain anonymous, employing a recently popularized technique in the documentary industry.

A particularly memorable animated scene is when "The Clown," a French ticket inspector with a keen eye for identifying forgeries, catches a few passengers using fake tickets likely forged by our protagonists. The animation's creative power is put on full display as the scene adopts a thrilling yet humorous mood. The entire train is drawn in dark colors, creating an ominous atmosphere, while "The Clown," ghostlike, morphs into strange shapes and appears unexpectedly around the passengers, capturing the fear felt by those traveling with fake tickets.

The interplay between animation and footage really shines during the scene when Ákos, Laci, and Petya experiment with removing the Pelikan blue ink from the tickets by using Domestos bleach. The film smoothly alternates between the animated sequence of their actions and the real-life footage of someone bleaching a ticket. Scenes such as this occur frequently, helping audiences better visualize these historical events.

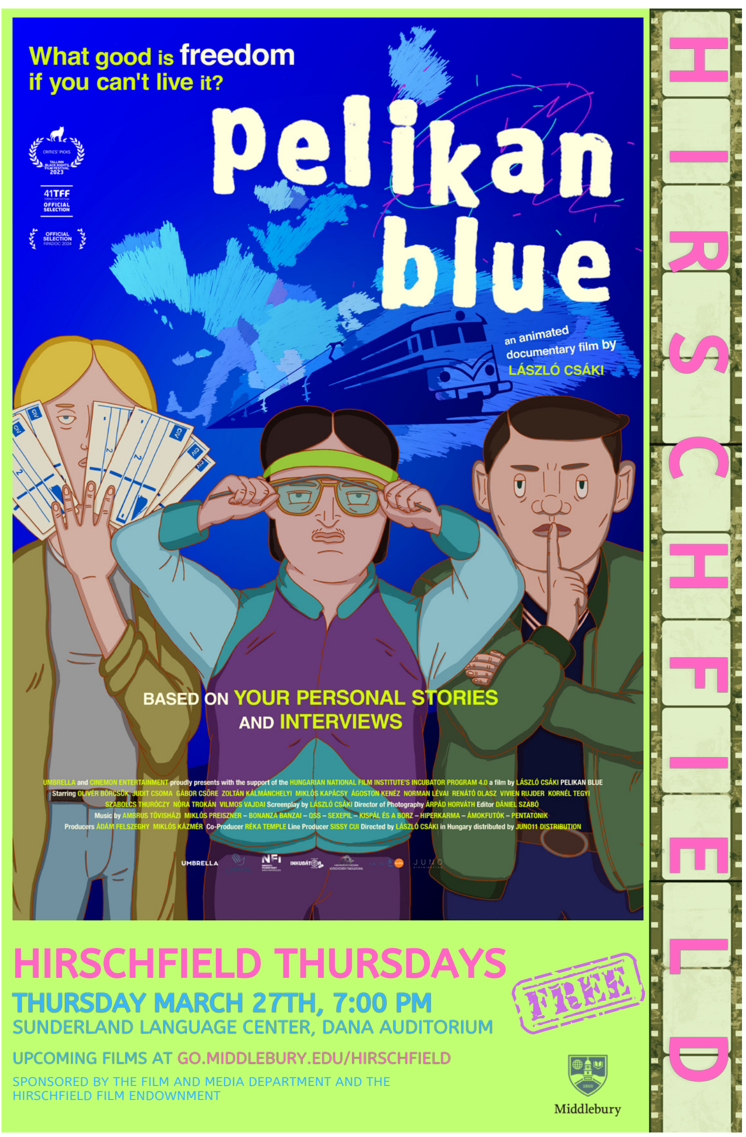
Beneath its vibrant visuals, "Pelikan Blue" explores the gap between desire and access, freedom and affordability. The motive behind the protagonists' forgery was not driven by greed, but by a hunger to explore the capitalist world newly accessible beyond Hungary's borders — a desire shared by many, like them, who simply lacked the financial means to realize it.

One of the film's most memorable lines captures this ethos: "My mother told me that stealing from another man is a crime, but stealing from the state is glorious." Though Ákos, Laci and Petya's actions were illegal, they viewed their forgery as reclaiming opportunities and freedom unjustly out of reach for civilians.

As their forgery network grows, the risks accumulate. Eventually, one fabricator is arrested; however, the entire community unites to protect each other against the threat of state power, defying the logic of the prisoner's dilemma. Their solidarity testifies to the larger struggle of the working class, protecting their chance at freedom and ideal against the intrusion of the state.

Even the authorities seem to recognize the futility of punishing this crime. In the end, the captured fabricator is simply interrogated and then released, escaping the severe punishment he had anticipated. The detective involved also revealed in an interview at the end of the documentary that he eventually found the case unnecessary to pursue further.

As the narrative progresses, "Pelikan Blue" becomes more than just an ink — it becomes a symbol of hope, resilience and resistance. It provides a loophole, an avenue into the capitalist world which the state couldn't close. The film's slogan echoes this liberation, asking a question still deeply embedded in our society: "What good is freedom if you can't live it?"


What good is freedom if you can't live it?
Pelikan blue
an animated documentary film by LÁSZLÓ CSÁKI
CRITICS' PICKS TALLINN BLACK NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL 2023
41TFF OFFICIAL SELECTION
OFFICIAL SELECTION
BASED ON YOUR PERSONAL STORIES AND INTERVIEWS
UMBRELLA and CINEMON ENTERTAINMENT proudly presents with the support of the HUNGARIAN NATIONAL FILM INSTITUTE'S INCUBATOR PROGRAM 4.0 a film by LÁSZLÓ CSÁKI PELIKAN BLUE
Starring OLIVÉR BÖRCSÖK JUDIT CSOMA GÁBOR CSŐRE ZOLTÁN KÁLMÁNCHELYI MIKLÓS KAPÁCSY ÁGOSTON KENÉZ NORMAN LÉVAI RENÁTÓ OLASZ VIVIEN RUJDER KORNÉL TEGYI SZABOLCS THURÓCZY NÓRA TROKÁN VILMOS VAJDAI Screenplay by LÁSZLÓ CSÁKI Director of Photography ÁRPÁD HORVÁTH Editor DÁNIEL SZABÓ
Music by AMBRUS TÓVISHÁZI MIKLÓS PREISZNER – BONANZA BANZAI – QSS – SEXEPIL – KISPÁL ÉS A BORZ – HIPERKARMA – ÁMOKFUTÓK – PENTATONIK
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COURTESY PHOTO / HIRSCHFIELD FILM SERIES

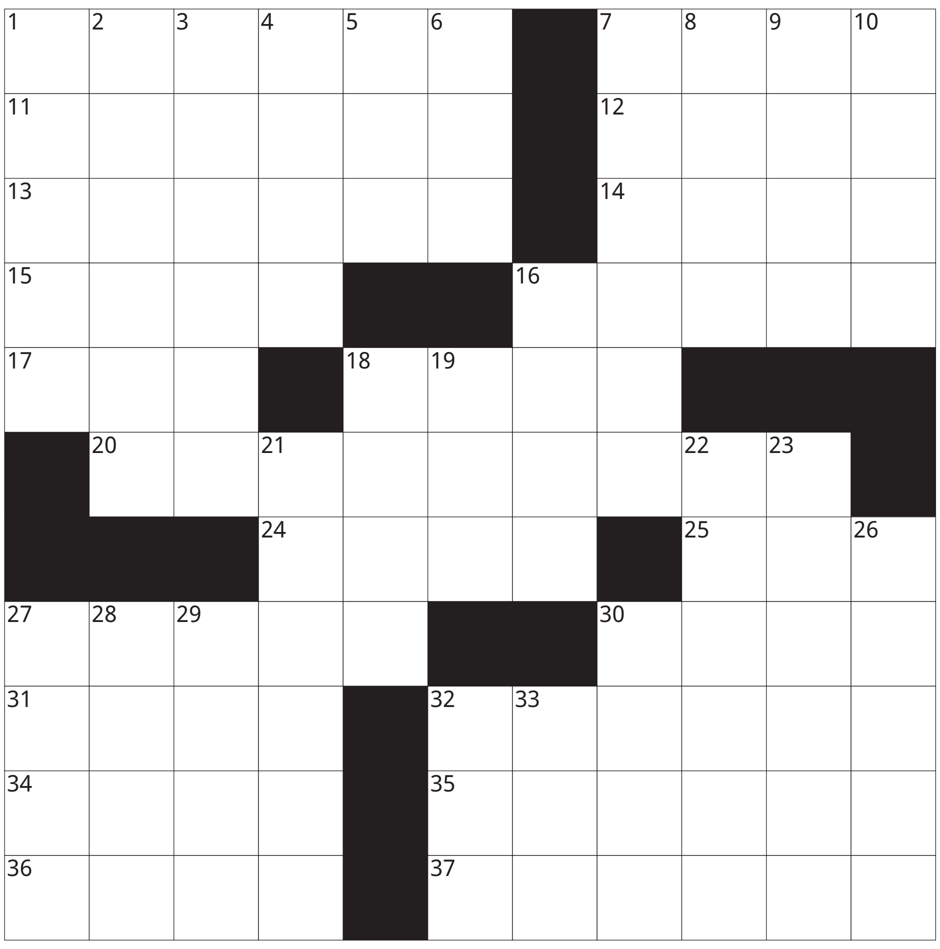
Hungarian animated documentary"Pelikan Blue" played at the Hirschfield Series this past Thursday.

The Big Dance

Egan Turner

ACROSS
1 Removed from office
7 Demolish a building
11 Opposing intersections?
12 Lake that links the two longest canals in the United States
13 "Sounds like it!"
14 Expansive
15 Requires a response of "Who's there?"
16 Smooths, as nails
17 The place with the helpful hardware folks
18 "Are you sure?"
20 Eliminates in March Madness, and a helpful hint to 7-Across, 15-Across, 32-Across, 36-Across, and 32-Down
24 Usher song with an interjection for a title
25 Ferret foot
27 Well taut?
30 Workplace safety agcy.
31 Scores?
32 Lucky action after a risky statement
34 Give up
35 "You get what I'm sayin'?"
36 Cause something to fall
37 Hollywood stars Henry and Jane

DOWN
1 Board that has produced "writings" from the "ghost of Mark Twain"
2 Enter a PIN, for a dorm room
3 Smooth or sleek
4 "___ or not ___: that is the question"
5 A 180 from WSW
6 Mar 9. - Nov. 2, in 2025
7 "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia" actor Danny
8 Verbal
9 Knowledgeable
10 Objects cut down at the end of March madness
16 Wahoo, Flathead, or Musselcracker, for three
18 Slurpee rival
19 Caribbean music genre
21 Pearl's home
22 Convinced to spend more
23 McKinley : Denali :: Rainier : ___
26 Walks in water



27 ___ Bell
28 Mt. statistic
29 Point at a junction
30 "Cars" voice actor Wilson
32 Copy of an expensive product
33 "The Matrix" hero

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH MACY DAGGIT '25, WOMENS TRACK AND FIELD

By JACK McGUIRE
Sports Editor

In this edition of Seven Questions, Macy Daggitt '25 spoke with The Campus about her track and field career, her recovery from an ACL injury her sophomore year and her experience with the team at Middlebury.

Jack McGuire: How did you get started with track?

Macy Daggitt: I started doing track and field in high school, and I feel like my entrance into the sport was kind of just serendipitous. I played lacrosse my freshman year, and after that, I was kind of done with that sport, and I thought, I'm just going to do track to stay in shape and join a community of teammates that I really like. On my first day of practice in high school, my coach told me I had potential, and so I worked with her a lot outside of practice. Over the summer during COVID, we would meet up on opposite sides of the track and do workouts. Then right before my junior year, my coach told me to pursue college running. At first I thought that it wasn't for me, and I didn't want to do that. But my coach asked for my top three schools, and I said that I really liked Middlebury. I gave her two other NESCACs, and within the week, the coach here at Middlebury reached out and said they'd love to have me in their program. And that's all she wrote. I committed to Middlebury the summer before my senior year, and I have absolutely no regrets – it's been the highlight of my time at Middlebury.

JM: What events specifically do you compete in?

MD: I kind of jump around – no pun intended. I do short sprints to the 100 and the 200, but my primary event is the long jump.

JM: How do you think you've grown as an athlete during your four years at Middlebury?

MD: I think that when the coach here at Middlebury made me an offer, it was kind of a shot in the dark. I was by no means expected to come into the program and be a scorer or contributing member, but I guess they saw some potential. I would say, kind of quantitatively, throughout the program, that I was one of the worst jumpers on the team when I got here. But last season, I ended up working out to a record in the long jump. So I think that I've made a lot of quantitative progress since being in the program. I've also learned a lot about myself and made a lot of friends and connections. I think I've grown a lot as a person and as an athlete.

COURTESY PHOTO / BRIAN FOLEY

Macy Daggitt '25 capped last season with a fourth-place finish at the NCAA Championships, securing First Team All-American status. She also set the new outdoor program records in the long jump (5.87m) and 4x100 relay (47.63).

JM: You've had a pretty successful year so far, how do you hope to build on that success, and what are your goals for the rest of the season?

MD: I would say my outdoor season last year was the peak of my career. I broke the outdoor record with an All-American finish. My indoor season has not been as strong as I had wanted it to be. I would love to do it again in the outdoor season, but my primary goal as a senior is just to take it all in, leave a lasting impact on the program, whether that'sa mark on the track or just as a person, as a teammate. So while I would love to put up big marks in the long jump again or break another record, I really think that my focus has been just enjoying the sport and appreciating it for all that it is in the last few weeks that I'll be doing it.

JM: Are there any specific mentors or people who have really guided you in your journey as a student athlete?

MD: I mean, my coaches obviously have been such great role models for me. They have been so supportive and understanding of everything that I've gone through, physically or mentally. They've always been there as a sounding board and advice-givers, and have been rational figures throughout my time in the program. But I would say first and foremost, my mentors are the women on the team who were older than me and graduated before me. We had one jumper my freshman and sophomore year, Cady Barnes '23. She was just an excellent athlete – I always looked up to her. I always strive vto be up to her caliber. I also had some senior friends last year who made me fall in love with the sport and being part of the team. I would say that just as a whole, the women's team and the women's program have all been my role models.

JM: What are some of your favorite memories from the team?
MD: I would definitely say the spring break trip to San Diego is a super strong, steadfast tradition in the program that everyone looks forward to. It's my favorite thing that we do as a team. But on a more personal level, my most meaningful memory comes from when I tore my ACL during my sophomore indoor season. I was out for an entire year, and the way my teammates stepped up for me was a true testament to how close we are. I couldn't travel to San Diego that year because of my surgery, but every single day I would receive texts and calls from my teammates that were just like, "we're thinking about you," or, "we saw a dolphin on the beach today, and it reminded us of you," because I have this dolphin outfit that I've worn to a number of track functions. I always knew how strong the community of girls was, but the ACL surgery and the way that they drove me to practice, or carried my plate in the dining halls was just a testament to how much I could rely on them, and that was really meaningful.

JM: What's your favorite restaurant in town?

MD: I'm gonna go Costello's. One of my teammates, Maggie, and I had this very niche order that wasn't on the menu, but we would do a chicken cutlet, pesto, arugula, tomato, and mozzarella cheese. It is truly the most delicious sandwich that I've ever had.

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MEN'S BASEBALL SPLITS OPENING NESCAC SERIES AGAINST AMHERST

By THEO MANIATIS
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO / STOCKTON PHOTO

The Middlebury baseball team fell 8-4 to Amherst in the doubleheader opener on Saturday. The second game was postponed due to the weather.

Middlebury men's baseball trekked three hours southbound to play Amherst in the first NESCAC series of the year. The clubs split the three-game series one to one, with Saturday's rubber match postponed due to inclement weather.

In Friday's opener, Middlebury jumped out to a 3–0 lead through a two-run double by Gus Parker '27 and a sacrifice fly by Brayden Mathews '26. The Panthers added two more in the fourth, while Kunal Handa '25 hurled four dominant shutout innings for his second win of the season. The Mammoths scored one in the 9th to make it 5–3, but reliever Dylan Knightly '26 slammed the door.

With storms looming Saturday morning, game two began under threatening skies. Carter Chi '28 hit an RBI single to give the Panthers an early 1–0 lead, but Amherst responded with six unanswered runs. Middlebury showed signs of life in the fourth, scoring three, before they ultimately fell 8–4.

In game three, the series finale, Middlebury built a four-run advantage by the second inning, but rain postponed the contest. A make-up date has not yet been announced.

With the series over, the Panthers move to 10–8 overall. After a sluggish start, the team has gained momentum recently, winning five out of their last six games. If questions surrounded the team's younger core earlier in the season, those have been quelled with the recent string of results. Four underclassmen started both of Saturday's games, generating much of the offensive firepower.

Will Ashley '27 spoke to The Campus about the key to maintaining the team's success.

"I think for us to continue to succeed, it's going to come from being a scrappier team. It's going to have to come from good, clean baseball. Small ball, if you will. Stealing bases, bunting guys over, making sure each guy is doing their part," he said.

Fielding remains and area for improvement. The Panthers have committed 29 errors across 18 games so far, a number they will need to reduce. Baseball, like most sports, is predicated on the execution of fundamentals. History suggests that teams mastering fundamentals tend to win championships. In the MLB, the World Series winners consistently rank among the league's top third in fielding percentage. Last year's champions, the Los Angeles Dodgers, committed 61 errors – the fewest in the majors. Granted, a 250 million dollar payroll also doesn't hurt.

On a personal level, Ashley attributes his breakout season to a change in mindset.

"The difference this year is how much fun I've had. Baseball is something I genuinely enjoy, and it should never be something that stresses me out or angers me," Ashley said. "I'm out there with 30 of my best friends playing the game that I love, and so the biggest thing for me is no matter what happens is to go out there and have a good time."

His approach is paying dividends — Ashley is batting .324 with a team-leading 20 RBIs. He's reinvented himself as a ballplayer after just recording seven plate appearances all of last season.

During our interview, Ashley didn't hold back on sharing his hopes for the team. "Setting our sights on a College World Series is ambitious, but very possible in the near future for this program," he said.

Why not? At this point in last year's season, the Panthers held a mediocre 8–7 record before embarking on a nine-game winning streak, finishing the season 32–13 and capturing the NESCAC Championship. The 2025 squad has followed a similar trajectory, heating up as of late. If they can limit their errors, they have a real chance of defending their title and making another NCAA tournament run.

For those who are not D3 baseball connoisseurs, there are two ways for Middlebury to qualify for the NCAA tournament: by winning the NESCAC, which grants them an automatic bid, or by receiving one of 17 "at-large bids" awarded by the NCAA selection committee to teams they think deserve to participate.

However, before Middlebury can ponder tournament aspirations, they have work to do. The Panthers face Union College away on Tuesday, and then host Wesleyan in a pivotal NESCAC series this weekend. The rain is forecasted to subside, so come out and support.

WOMEN'S HOCKEY FALLS TO AMHERST IN FROZEN FOUR REMATCH

By KANAN CLIFFORD
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO / RICKY BASSMAN

Middlebury women's hockey fought hard but lost 3-1 to Amherst in the NCAA semifinals last Friday.

As the dwindling rays of sun illuminated Middlebury College's campus on Friday, March 29, the women's hockey team was locked in a tight one-goal Frozen Four battle against Amherst — this time in distant River Falls, Wis. Middlebury women's hockey fans who watched the game from afar (many of thom undoubtedly wished the game had been played in the superior Chip Arena) held their breath as Amherst forward Alyssa Xu terrorized the Panthers' defense with a barrage of shots on goal. Ultimately, two quick Amherst goals in the third period proved decisive.

This Frozen Four showdown was the fourth meeting between Middlebury and Amherst this season, a rematch of the 2025 NESCAC Championship final, where the Mammoths eked out a 1–0 win to wrest the conference title away from the reigning champion Panthers.

"Amherst-Middlebury games seem to always come down to [the] wire," Coach Mandigo said.

The Panthers, trailing 2–1 to the formidable Amherst Mammoths, pulled their goalie with two minutes remaining in the game — a desperate push to equalize. Kate Flynn '27 skated into zero-foot range, willing the puck into the goal, but Amherst goalie Natalie Stott smothered it. With that, Middlebury's quest for their second national championship in four years came to a quiet end.

Despite the Panthers' constant ability to redeem themselves from past losses — a prime example being their NESCAC semifinal win against Colby following a regular season shutout sweep — they could not overcome this hurdle.

But that is not to say that these players didn't fight hard — this game was markedly high-intensity, with both teams playing physical hockey in a well-fought game.

"We had numerous odd-man rushes, but couldn't capitalize," Coach Bill Mandigo said in the postgame press conference. "We try to adapt…but credit to Amherst for coming out and attacking."

One interesting note from Coach Mandigo was that Chip Kenyon Arena's width more closely resembles an international rink — at 95 feet — than NHL and college hockey rinks, which are 85 feet wide. Playing at home thus affords a unique advantage for Middlebury, and each away game in a smaller rink creates less space and a different style of hockey.

Alas, Middlebury's shots on goal had the misfortune of catching every piece of Stott's gear, stick, and gloves — just as they had been in the NESCAC Championships. But with 7:30 eclipsed in the third period, Middlebury scored their first goal as Cece Ziegler '25 fired a shot that deflected off of an Amherst defender and into the lower third of the net.

Ziegler, a St. Paul, Minnesota native, delivered an emotional message during the postgame presser.

"It meant a lot to end my career surrounded by so many people who love and support me, and to wear this Middlebury jersey for the final time," Ziegler said.

Both Ziegler and Raia Schluter '25 emphasized the value of their close-knit team in this latest run, reminiscing about their miraculously undefeated season as first years in 2022, which started an unforgettable four years.

Amherst, on a separate note, proceeded to lose against the University of Wisconsin, River Falls in the final game of the hockey season on Sunday by a score of 3–1. For the jaded Middlebury fan, Amherst's failure to win provides a small satisfaction in the wake of disappointment.

But as this almost five-month season comes to a close, the team will part ways with 10 graduating, leaving them without many of their leaders and contributors, but with full of hope for the future of a strong, enduring program. Excitement for next year starts now, as the puck drop on the Panthers' first game this November gets closer each and every day.